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# TIP TOP WEEKLY

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FOR THE AMERICAN YOUTH

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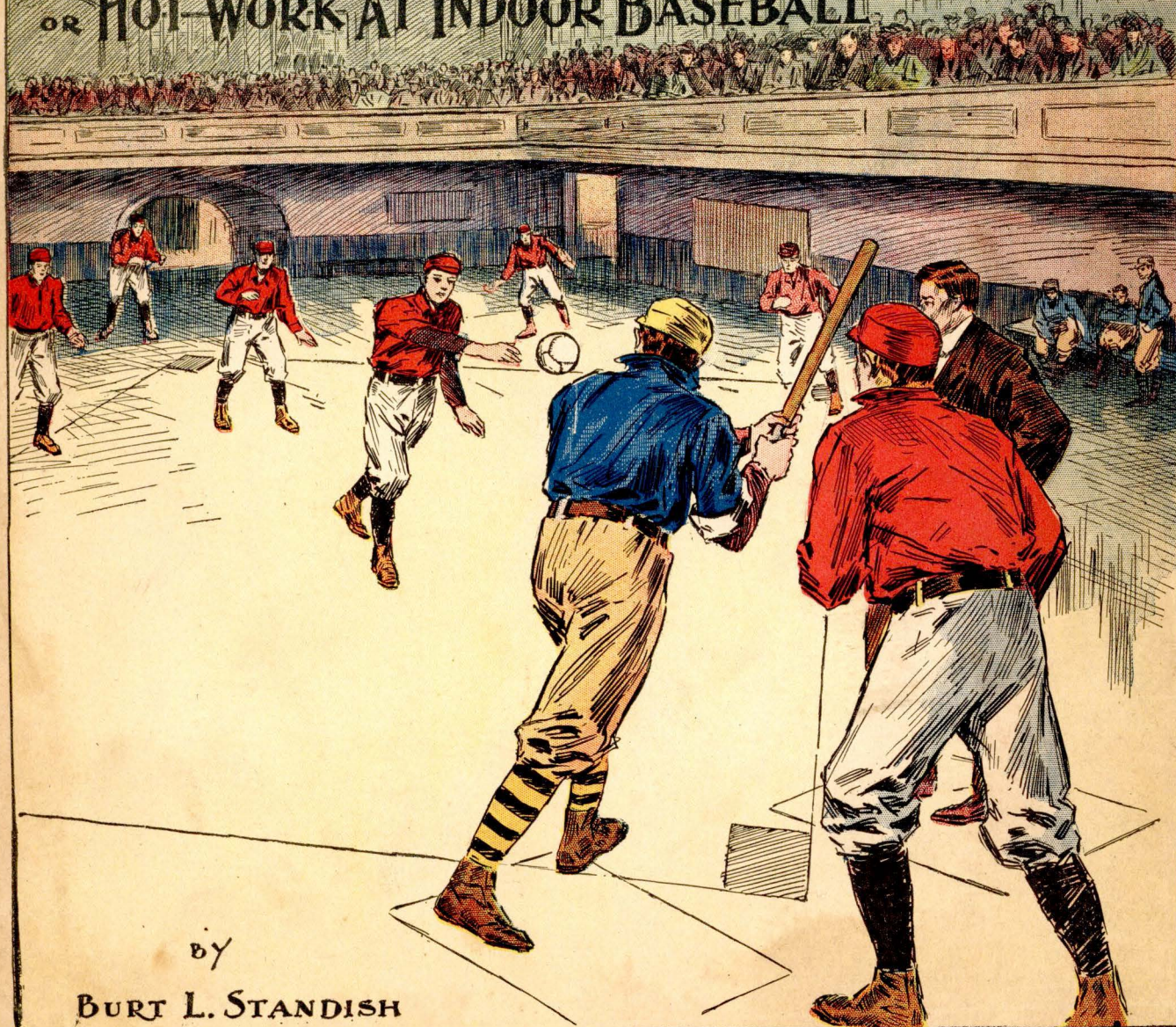
**No. 515**

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## DICK MERRIWELL'S SATISFACTION

OR HOT WORK AT INDOOR BASEBALL

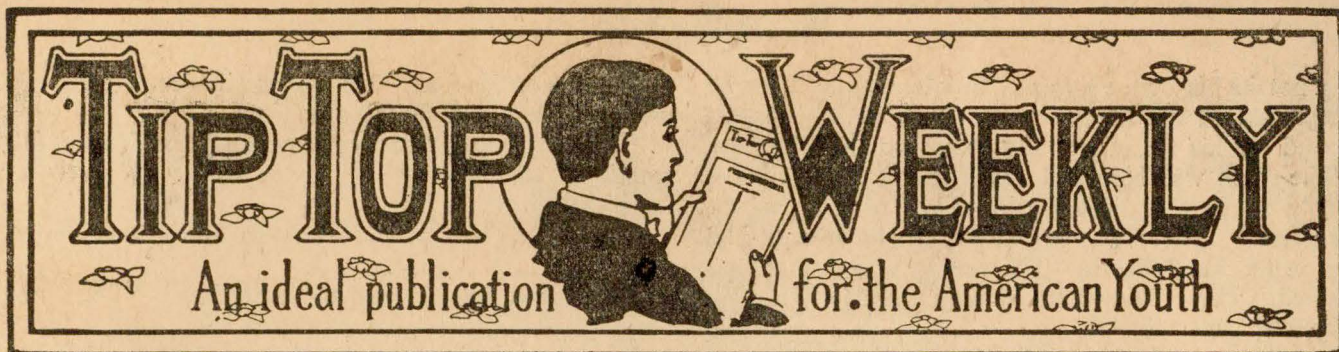


by

**BURT L. STANDISH**

Chester Arlington wore a confident smile as he prepared to strike. Dick pitched the ball, and Chet landed on it fairly, hitting it a savage crack.





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# DICK MERRIWELL'S SATISFACTION

OR,

## HOT WORK AT INDOOR BASEBALL.

By BURT L. STANDISH.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE MORNING AFTER.

The cold, gray light of a bleak mid-winter morning was creeping in at the window when Vance Silkley awoke.

Silkley stirred slightly and uttered a faint groan. After this he lay quite still for a few seconds, staring blankly at the cracked ceiling, while a vague sense of wonderment crept over him.

"Oh, great smoke!" he finally muttered. "What's the matter with my head? And my mouth—it tastes like an ash-barrel! I'm sick—oh, mercy, I'm sick! Where am I, anyhow?"

When he tried to lift his head it seemed as if some one struck it a resounding blow with a hammer, and he let it fall back on the pillow, groaning once more.

"I must be dying!" he huskily whispered. "I've had a terrible fever! I'm burning up inside! I'd give a thousand dollars for a bucket of ice-water!"

At that moment, being unable to recall the events of

the wild night just past, Silkley actually fancied himself on the verge of death. This frightened him so that, in spite of his weakness and the terrible throb in his head, he succeeded in struggling to a sitting position on the bed. With both hands pressed to his head, he sat there and stared across the room. He found himself looking into a tall, dingy mirror, and the reflection he saw in that mirror literally appalled him.

"Heavens!" he gasped. "That can't be me!"

As a rule his cheeks were pink with the tint of health, his eyes bright and clear, and his general appearance wholesome. The face he saw in the mirror was ghastly pale, the eyes were bloodshot, the hair was rumpled and tousled until it added a final touch of ghastliness to the whole effect. Perhaps the dim, gray light made this reflection appear even more startling and repellent than it would have been if distinctly seen.

Having stared at the horrible apparition in the mirror for several seconds, Vance finally took a survey of the room. Slowly he began to understand that he



was not in his own room at Fardale. Even after he comprehended this he was not satisfied until he looked around for his roommate and found no signs of him.

The room was bare and unattractive at any time—doubly so in the disillusioning light of the "morning after." There was no carpet on the floor. The wall-paper was hideous. The ceiling was stained and cracked. The windows were dingy and partly hidden by yellow paper shades.

But what awoke Vance to an actual realization of his situation was the sight of a small, square table, around which stood four chairs. The table bore a shameful burden that told the story of the night. There were empty bottles, dirty glasses, cigarette stubs, cards and poker chips on that table.

After staring at the telltale evidence of a shameful debauch, Silkley groaned again and fell back on his pillow.

"I remember!" he muttered; "oh, blazes, I remember it all now! That is, I remember the most of it, although I can't seem to recollect when I went to bed. The last I knew we were playing. I was in the hole and trying to bull the game. Such beastly luck—such infernal luck! It was rotten—rotten! I took the first pot, but after that everything went against me. Why, I couldn't win with a straight flush! If I happened to hold one, some other fellow would hold a better one. Never saw anything like it. Wonder how much I lost, anyhow?"

This started a disjointed train of thought which added to his mental disturbance and anguish. Finally he desperately dragged himself out of bed, found his clothes where they had been dropped on the floor and rummaged through pocket after pocket. At the finish he was sitting on the floor, staring blankly at the clothing scattered about him.

"Broke!" he whispered; "busted! Not a cent left! Good Lord! I'm in trouble now! The gov'nor sent me a check for a hundred to defray expenses through this term. I haven't got a penny! That hundred is gone! How the dickens am I going to live? Of course, my tuition is paid, but I can't scrub along without money. I'm a fool—a blooming fool! Oh, my head! my head!"

He rocked backward and forward, pressing one hand to his throbbing forehead. Finally he snarled:

"Yes, I'm a fool—a thundering fool to have anything to do with that outcast! He led me into it. Satan take Chet Arlington! I'd like to throttle him!"

"Dear me!" exclaimed a familiar voice. "You must have a bad case of remorse this morning, Silk, old sport."

The door was open, and another boy quietly entered the room.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE PENALTY.

This boy paused, after closing the door, thrust his hands into his pockets and surveyed Vance, a quizzical smile on his face. He was tastily dressed and apparently fresh and fit for anything.

"Seems to me I heard you knocking me, Vance, old man," he observed.

Silkley glared at him.

"You're a fine friend—not to have!" he cried weakly.

"Oh, come, come!" said the other boy. "The trouble with you is that you want a drink."

"Yes, I do want a drink. I want a pitcher of ice-water."

"I thought likely you would," nodded Chester, "so, when the boy brought me my morning nip, I told him to look out for you. He'll be right along with the ice-water and a big drink of whisky."

"Whisky?" groaned Silkley, as his stomach seemed to give a rebellious twist that turned him cold clean to his toes. "Don't speak of it! I wouldn't touch a drop of the stuff for anything in the world! I'll never touch it again! I'm done, Arlington—I'm done!"

Chet leaned against the door and laughed heartily.

"I've been through that myself, old fellow," he confessed. "Why, I've vowed a score of times that never again would I even look at the stuff. But what's the use? Nobody keeps vows of that sort. They'd be quitters if they did. You're no quitter, Silk. You're a sport. You'll change your mind after I drive an eye-opener into you."

"You'll never drive anything into me this morning—that is, anything more than ice-water. Oh, I'd like to stick my head into a bucket of it and drink every drop."

"Your coppers are sizzling, old boy. Well, I wasn't in the best condition myself when I opened my little peepers. I felt a little bit woozy, but I knew what would put me right. There are no bells in this little ranch, so I derricked myself out of bed, opened the door, and yelled for some one—any one. Pretty soon a boy came up and asked me not to wake up everybody in the house. I told him I would refrain from further disturbance if he would hastily yank me up a yard or two of good, fresh water and about four fingers of red-eye. All the time Blacklock was sweetly snoozing in our palatial bed. You see Rand never hits the can, so he doesn't have any of these delightful, early morning sensations.

"Well, the boy brought me up the water and the whisk. I flushed my tank. I took a sponge bath, and then I came round to see if you were still living. I find you are nearly a living still."

"Don't try to joke!" groaned Silkley. "Don't make any rotten puns! You fooled me, Arlington! You told me those fellows would be easy fruit! I had a hundred, and now I'm busted! Did I lose all that money?"

Chet shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm afraid you did, old fellow," he admitted. "You went broke, and I had to lend you something. I have it down in a little book here."



He took the book from his pocket and turned the leaves, finally pausing, as he said:

"Yes, here it is. Let you have ten the first go. Then you came back for another ten. And finally you touched me up for five more. You owe me twenty-five plunks."

"I'll never pay you!" panted Vance. "It was a skin game, Arlington! You roped me in! Those fellows were your pals!"

"Now hold on right where you are, Silk!" commanded Chester, with an offended air. "I won't stand for that! You'll think better of it after awhile. Joe Potts never quit ahead before in all his life. He's always been a sucker. Tom Masters knows about as much poker as I know Sanscrit. Potts quit ahead of the game, and Masters must have been in a good bit. I won a little, but not much. It was nothing but beastly luck, Silk. Those fellows couldn't do the trick again in a thousand years. It's queer how the cards will act sometimes."

"But I'm in an awful hole!" muttered Silkley. "I've taken the money that was sent me to defray expenses and lost every dollar of it! I can't call on dad for any more. My old man trusted me in the first place. If he ever found out about this he'd be onto me for fair. Not many fellows have a hundred sent them at the beginning of a term. Most chaps get it dribbled out to them a dollar at a time."

"I tell you not to quit!" cried Arlington. "You'll win it all back."

"I'd like to know how. I haven't got anything to win it back with. I'm cleaned out, and I owe you twenty-five."

"You brace up and stick by me. I'll land you on your feet."

There was a rap on the door.

"Don't let him in!" exclaimed Vance in a whisper, as he staggered to his feet. "Wait until I get into bed."

After he had rolled into bed and feebly pulled the clothes over him Chet flung open the door, and a boy entered, bearing in one hand a pitcher of water, in which the ice clinked, and in the other hand a tray, with glasses and whisky.

"That's the stuff, Rube!" nodded Chester. "Put it on the table."

"My name ain't Rube," drawled the boy resentfully.

"Oh, isn't it? I thought it was. I beg your pardon, Josh."

"'Tain't Josh nuther."

"Why, that's queer. How could I make such a mistake, Hiram?"

"My name ain't Josh, nor Rube, nor Hiram. It's Philander. They call me Land for short."

"Why, I might have known it was Philander," said Chet. "Here you are, Land—here's ten cents. Go buy yourself a suit of clothes."

"Thank ye, sir," said Philander, as he accepted the money. "I hope ye ain't robbin' yerself. Ye ought

to be keeferful not ter git too generous with your money."

"Well, what do you think of that!" muttered Chester, as the door closed behind Philander. "I wonder if that was sarcasm. I swear I didn't think he knew enough to be sarcastic. Here you are, Vance. I'm going to pour you out a glass of water, but you will have to drive down this drink first."

"Give me the water," urged Silkley. "I'll take the drink by and by."

"Not on your life! You'll take it now, or not a drop of *aqua pura* passes your ruby lips. It's the only thing that will put you right up on your pins. If you follow the directions of Dr. Arlington, he'll have you feeling like a fighting-cock inside a half-hour, and I'll guarantee you'll eat enough breakfast to satisfy a prize-fighter."

Silkley accepted the glass of whisky, though the smell of it made him feel doubly ill. He tried to lift it to his lips, but revolted and held it off at arm's length.

Chet laughed heartily.

"Hold your nose," he advised. "Get it down somehow—get it down, anyhow. When you start don't stop until you finish it. Go ahead, old sport; you're no quitter. Be a real man."

Thus adjured, Vance stiffened himself and made one more attempt. Placing the glass to his lips he desperately gulped down the fiery poison. Having finished it he dropped the glass and held out both hands for the tumbler of water.

"Quick—great Heaven, quick!" he gasped.

Still laughing, Arlington gave him the water, which he greedily swallowed.

"There you are!" cried Chet, slapping him on the shoulder. "That will put your blood into circulation. You'll be all right now."

### CHAPTER III.

#### STILL SCHEMING.

Silkley wiped the tears from his eyes, gasping for breath.

"That's a frightful price to pay for a little sport," he declared. "Sport—it wasn't much sport for me! I'm paying the price all right!"

"Oh, you'll get used to it so you won't mind it after awhile, old fellow," asserted Chester. "You want to think it's easy to take an eye-opener. Just down it quick, and you won't find it so hard. I'll bet a dollar you're feeling better now."

"I am," admitted Vance, bracing up a little. "The stuff seemed to warm me. I was cold. I didn't seem to have any life in me. But a dozen drinks won't bring back the money I lost last night. That's what galls me."

"We'll get it back, my boy. Never worry about that. Always look for your money where you lost it. If you lose it at poker just keep at the game, and you'll



recover it in time. I tried to get that big slob, Kilmer, over here last night. He's chairman of our athletic committee, you know. He's been a hard proposition for me. I did get a little twist on him, but he squirmed out of my clutches for awhile. Think I've got him again, though. He dodged me a long time. You know he plays the game, but I couldn't seem to get in with him. Had a crowd of his own. Finally one night, through a little scheming, I butted into his game, and now I own a few of his I O U's. Those slips of paper have kept him mighty quiet. I've been doing a few stunts, without any interference from the athletic committee. I'm captain of the Fairport Indoor Baseball Team. Tell you, Slick, we've got a rattling team, too. We can warm anything in our line hereabouts."

"What do I care about that?" growled Vance. "You can be captain of any old Fairport team for all of me!"

"I've got a little something up my sleeve," chuckled Chet.

"You must have had some cards up your sleeve last night!" snapped Silkley.

"Oh, no, I don't play that sort of a game, my boy. Let me see. Your roommate is Percy Ring. Am I right?"

"Yes."

"How long have you been rooming with him?"

"Not long."

"Ring is chairman of the Fardale Athletic Committee, isn't he?"

"That's what he is."

"I never did like that fellow," said Chet.

"I'm not stuck on him myself, even if he is my roommate," confessed Vance. "But I don't see what you're driving at."

"I'll tell you later, my boy. What you want now is another drink."

"Oh, no!"

"Oh, yes. I want one myself. We'll both have one."

Chester opened the door a bit, thrust his head out, and whistled shrilly.

A few moments later the footsteps of Philander were heard approaching the door.

"Bring us two more whiskies and charge it to my account, Ephraim," directed Arlington.

"Gol-ding it!" cried Philander. "You've gut my name wrong ag'in!"

"Is it possible, Zebediah?" exclaimed Chet.

"Zebediah? Zebediah?" snarled the boy. "I tell ye my name is Philander!"

"Oh, yes, so it is," smiled Chester, in his most affable manner. "I'll try to remember. I won't make another mistake, Leander. Just hump yourself and yank up those drinks for us."

The boy departed, growling and muttering to himself, while Chester chuckled over it, as if regarding the whole thing as a very funny joke.

"I always feel good after I've had a couple of drinks

in the morning," he said. "These hayseeds amuse me. I like to get them on the string. I'll have that boy bughouse before I'm through with him."

"Think I'll dress," said Vance.

"Oh, not yet, not yet," said Chester, holding up his hand. "You're going to take a sponge bath. Ice-cold water! That'll make you feel fine!"

"Woo!" shivered Silkley. "I can't do it! My goodness!"

"But I insist—I insist," laughed Arlington. "I've had one myself. There's nothing like it. Wait till you get that next drink into you, and then ice-water inside or outside will have no further terrors. Here's a pitcher of water right here. You haven't any sponge, but you can take one of these towels and use that. Just slop it all over yourself, and then take the towel and rub until you are as red as a boiled lobster."

"I'm green as a live lobster, anyhow!" grumbled Vance. "If I hadn't been green, and a lobster at that, I'd never loosened up on a hundred cold plunks last night."

"You're letting that prey on your mind, old fellow. Forget it. It's all in a lifetime. The chaps who worry about little losses like that never get on their feet again. I used to worry myself, but I've found out that there's always a way to pull out of a hole. All a fellow has to do is to keep his eyes open and his think-tank working. Here comes Ezekiel with the fire-water."

The boy was heard dragging his heavy feet over the bare floor of the hall as he approached. Chet flung the door wide open.

"Walk right in with the lemonade, Jeremiah," he invited, with a sweep of his hand.

"Jere-miah? Jeremi—"

The boy choked in his rage and exasperation.

"Look out, look out, Erastus! You'll spill the lemonade!" warned Arlington.

"Spill it! Yès, dad bim it! I'll throw it right at ye, if ye don't stop callin' me outer my name!" cried the excited boy. "You're one of them smart fellers that thinks he can poke fun at other folks, that's what you be! I'll stand a hull lot of it, and then, by jinks! I'll git madder'n a hornet! When I git mad you wantner look out for me!"

Chester took the glasses from the boy.

"I'll wager that's right, Ebenezer," he nodded. "When you get mad you're a holy terror. Why, I'll guarantee you eat nails. You look to me as if you could chew up a few spikes now and relish them."

"You seem to think I'm a regular jackass!" snarled the enraged lad.

"But, my dear Josiah, even a jackass is all right, if he knows his place."

"But the trouble with you is you don't know your place!" howled the boy, as he turned and rushed away.

Chet stood still, his jaw drooping.

"Well, what do you think of that?" he finally muttered.

In spite of himself, Vance Silkley grinned.



"I think he got back at you, all right. Sometimes these country yokels are not so dull after all."

"I'll have to lay that up for him. Come now, we'll surround this liquid, and then you'll take your bath and rub. Told you I'd have you feeling fine and frisky in short order, and I'm bound to keep my word."

Not a little to Silkley's surprise, the second drink was far from being as repugnant to him as the first had been. He drank it without making much of a fuss, and was complimented and praised by Arlington.

"Now turn out a bowl full of that good, cool water and get 'after yourself," urged Chet. "I'm going back to see if Blacklock has turned out. He is a fancy sleeper."

"He was the only fellow who had any sense last night. If I'd had half as much sense as he had I'd have more dollars now."

"I told you you'd brace up. Why, you're beginning to make puns. A fellow can't feel so badly when he makes a pun. Promise me you'll take the cold bath and the rub, and I'll leave you."

"Go ahead," said Vance. "As long as I have followed your directions thus far, I'll keep at it. You can depend on me to take the bath and rubdown."

Arlington left the room and returned to the one he had occupied during the latter hours of the night. He entered and found Randal Blacklock had risen and was dressed.

Blacklock was a dark-haired, cold-eyed fellow of fine physique and remarkable habits. At Fairport it was said that Rand "had not a single redeeming vice." He never drank. He did not smoke. He did not swear. He did not play cards—in short, he did none of the forbidden things. Still, in all the school there was not a more unpopular fellow. In all Blacklock's days at Fairport he had never made a single friend, with the exception of Chester Arlington. To those who knew both boys well the apparent friendliness between them was a cause of no small wonderment, for in habits no two lads could have been more dissimilar.

"So you've crawled out of the hay, Rand!" cried Chet. "Didn't know but you were going to sleep all day."

Blacklock shrugged his fine shoulders.

"I don't see how it is that you can hit the pace you did last night, and then turn out so early this morning. I sat up watching you chaps until I was plumb tired out. That's why I slept this morning and failed to hear you when you got up. What have you been doing?"

"Oh, I've taken a few snifters to brace me, and driven a couple into our slob friend, Silkley. Say, you should see him, Rand—that is, you should have seen him when I did! Ha! ha! ha! There he was, sitting on the floor, with his clothes scattered about him and the pockets all turned wrong side out. He was the sickest-looking individual I ever put my eyes on. He had a head as big as a bass drum. What made him sicker than anything else was the fact that he couldn't find a ten-cent piece in his clothes."

"Of course he couldn't," said Blacklock. "You looked out for that. Say, didn't he play like a chump after he got good and loaded! Tried to drive you out a couple of times when he didn't have a thing in his fist."

"And you sat where you could see his cards," said Chet. "I knew he was bluffing, for you gave me the high sign. Oh, jingoes! Old Remorse had him this morning. He was swearing off, all right. Never again for little Vance—that was the burden of his song."

"You didn't get all of his dough."

"Oh, no; I was too slick for that. You see, I've been trimming Joe Potts right along, and I was afraid Joe would quit if he didn't strike a little winning streak. For that reason I decided it would be a good piece of diplomacy to let Potts scoop in a part of Silkley's coin. And that fellow, Masters, came out ahead, too. I didn't care anything about him. I'd cleaned him down to his collar-bone, but he had fool luck, and now I suppose he thinks he's a fancy poker sharp. I expect Potts and Masters are in Fairport this morning. They insisted on driving over after the finish last night. They couldn't get into Stewart Hall, but it was their idea that they'd arrive in town under cover of darkness and in that way would escape being questioned. We don't have to get back for a couple of days. During that time I propose to do my best to push my little scheme through."

"I don't quite catch onto your scheme," confessed Blacklock. "Isn't it about time for you to put me wise? Unless you were after Silkley's dough, I don't see what you wanted of him."

"Do you know Percy Ring?"

"Ring? Why, isn't he the chairman of the Fardale Athletic Committee?"

"Correct. He's Silkley's roommate. Now Silkley and I have had our troubles, but I decided that I could use the fellow and through him I might get hold of Ring."

"What do you want of Ring?"

"I want lots of things of him. I want to have a good grip on him. With Kilmer, of the Fairport Athletic Committee, under my paw and Ring fixed so he'll feel like being considerate, I can come pretty near arranging affairs between Fairport and Fardale to suit myself."

"How are you going to get at Ring? I don't quite follow you."

"I happen to know that Ring plays penny poker, although he tries to keep it dark. He is poor. A loss of twenty-five dollars would put him in the hole so far that he'd be desperate."

"But, if he's poor, it's likely he hasn't twenty-five to lose."

"That's where little Chester's friendly hand is shown. I'll lend him money."

"Oh!" muttered Rand, nodding a bit. "But you'll have something to show for it?"

"Leave that to me! I've got Silkley so he'll be



mighty obliging if I stake him. Silkley rooms with Ring. Through Silk I'm going to get my digits on Ring, just as true as my name is Arlington! Leave it to me!"

## CHAPTER IV.

### OUTLINING THE SNARE.

Once more returning to Silkley's room, Chet found Vance nearly dressed. A bit of color had returned to Silkley's cheeks, and his eyes seemed clearer.

"Why, you're looking like a game-cock now, old sport!" cried Chet.

"I feel first-rate if I didn't realize what a fool I was," answered Vance. "You've taught me how to cure a big head in the morning, but that hasn't brought my money back."

"You can't seem to forget it, can you?"

"Of course not. Who would? I'm afraid I'm in a bad hole, Arlington. I don't see how I'm going to get through this term."

"It's singular you refuse to take any stock in my word, Silk, old chap. I've told you I'd stand by you, and I will. I'll stake you, but I want you to do me a favor."

"Stake me?" muttered Silkley. "Just what do you mean by that?"

"Why, I'll lend you money as you need it."

"What if I can't pay it back?"

"We'll try to fix that, all right. You're not going to have bad luck every time you play. I'll trust you as long as you need it, and you can pay me when things come right."

"Do you really mean that, Arlington?" cried Vance, as if still incredulous.

"Come, come! You're getting me sore with your doubts and questions."

"What's the favor you want me to do you?"

Chester sat down on a chair, selected a cigarette, deliberately lighted it, and then tipped back, elevating his feet to the top of the table.

"I'm mighty sorry you got hit so hard last night, Silk. The favor I want is a chance to get into a game with your friend, Ring."

"My friend?" cried Vance. "Even if he is my roommate, he is no particular friend of mine."

"Still, you have some influence on him—you know something about his habits and his little escapades. He plays poker occasionally."

"Not the kind you play. He plays penny ante, with a five-cent limit. You know Rand hasn't much money, and he has to trim pretty close."

"Do you think he ever takes a drink?"

"Oh, I don't know. I fancy he would if he felt sure no one would give him away. I have a sneaking notion that Rand would like to be sporty, but he realizes it is impossible, considering his means."

"Well, now we'll encourage him, Silk—we'll encourage him to be real sporty. A fellow who seldom

hits the booze is liable to be an easy mark when he gets a few under his vest. What I want you to do, Vance, is to get this Ring into a game where I can appear on the scene and take a hand. I have a couple more days away from school. The old lady fixed that for me. Blacklock hasn't got to go back right away. It struck me as a good scheme for us all to slip over to Fardale to-day. I know lots of fellows there outside the school. I can get together enough to make up a game. You go back to the academy, with a little wad of the long green, which I will furnish, and tell Ring you've made a winning. Tell him it's dead easy and that you're going to get into the game to-night at the Fardale House. Explain that it's a small game, but a dead cinch to win. Ask him to come along with you. If he doesn't want to play just coax him along all the same. Tell him you will lend him two or three dollars, in case he will play and needs them, and you won't ask him to pay them back until he comes forward and volunteers to do so. Just work him as slick as you can. You're pretty slick, Silk, my boy, and you ought to carry this through. Don't you think you can?"

Vance shook his head.

"I'm rather doubtful," he said. "I can try it."

"Well, try it. Do your level best. I'll have a room in the hotel and the fellows will be there. Don't mention my name to Ring. Just bring him up to the room and get him into the game. Then I'll kind of drift in, and, of course, I'll take a hand after I'm coaxed awhile. I don't know anything about manipulating the cards, but I'll have a chap in the game who does. He'll give me the hands to go against Ring. In case we can get Ring a little boozy and off guard, I'll skin him down to the bone."

"That won't take you long. He hasn't got much money, you know."

"Well, I'll be awfully sorry for him. I'll lend him money. I'll take his I O U's. That'll keep him going, if we can ever get him started."

"But what's there behind all this? Why do you wish to work this game on Ring?"

"If I can get the chairman of your athletic committee into my clutches I think I'll find a way to sink a shaft in Dick Merriwell. He's the son of a gun I'm after."

"Why, I was beginning to think you had given that up, Arlington."

"You were?" smiled Chester, inhaling a whiff of smoke and letting it dribble from his mouth as he talked. "Well, that's because you don't know me. I never give up. I've had hard luck at Fairport. In order to straighten things out and get fairly on top of the heap, I've got to down Merriwell at something. I've been telling right along that I'd do it every time we went up against him, but fate soaked me each trip. If I carry this thing through, I'm going to trim Merriwell, and that'll give me a grip on baseball at Fair-



port. I know there's a scheme to freeze me out of baseball this coming spring. They can't do it! I'm bound to be in the game!"

"Well, I must say you try some of the queerest schemes of any fellow I ever knew. If you do trap Ring, as you plan, what are you going to force him into?"

"Leave that to me!"

"And, by the way," continued Silkley, with sudden suspicion, "it seems to me that this little plan you outline is a great deal like the plan you carried out last night. You caught me all right. I want to know if that's it!"

He suddenly thumped the table on which he leaned, glaring across at Chet.

Arlington deliberately took another whiff, then snapped the butt of the cigarette into a corner.

"Now look here," he said, "I've told you straight that I can't manipulate the cards. I'd like to know how. That's flat and frank. Certainly Potts can't monkey with them, and you know Masters is a green-horn. Now think it over. Under such circumstances, how could there be anything crooked about that game? Had I been able to stack the cards I'd come out a bigger winner. Do you think I'd let Joe Potts or Tom Masters get away with any of the coin? Come out of it, Silk!"

"Well, all I can say is that it seemed rather suspicious after you outlined your plan to get at Ring."

Chester thrust a hand into his pocket and brought out a roll of money.

"Here, my boy," he said, with a flourish, as he stripped off a twenty-dollar bill and a couple of tens; "here's forty. I'll just jot it down in my book, and you can pay when you feel like paying. That makes sixty-five you owe me. If you need more, just whisper in my ear when the time comes."

Silkley's hand shook a bit as he picked up the money.

"This ought to save me from a mighty bad fall," he confessed.

"Not only that," nodded Chet, "but it will stake you so you can buck the tiger again. I'll put my friend on to give you two or three fancy hands to-night. We'll have a couple of suckers besides Ring in the game. Perhaps you'll win back all you lost."

The face of the Fardale boy flushed and his eyes gleamed with eager anticipation.

"If I could!" he muttered; "if I only could!"

## CHAPTER V.

### CHET SUCCEEDS.

The plot worked to perfection. When he set out to be persuasive Vance Silkley had a most effective and captivating way. He succeeded, with no great difficulty, in leading Percy Ring to the slaughter. At first Ring was wary and cautious, but Silkley assured him that it was all right, and, besides themselves, no other academy boy would be in the game.

Arlington was not present at the outset. In fact, he did not appear until Ring had won nearly three dollars and the limit had been raised from a nickel to a dime.

Then Chester wandered in and was greeted by the players.

"Happened to drop over to see my sister, you know," he said. "The clerk tipped me off that you fellows were having a sociable little time up here, so I thought I'd come around. Hope I'm not intruding."

"Oh, no! no!" cried every one but Ring.

Percy was silent.

"Won't you take a hand?" invited one of the players.

"Can't stop. I'd like to," said Chet, "but I think I'll just sit down for a little smoke, while I watch you fellows play. Don't mind me. Go ahead."

It seemed very natural, without a suggestion of any prearranged plot. Ring breathed easier as Arlington declined to play.

Percy won the next jack-pot, which contained over a dollar.

Silkley winked at him across the table. The expression on Vance's face plainly said, "I told you so."

It was Vance who proposed that they should have something to drink.

"No, no," objected Ring, "I don't like that. We can't get it without the hotel people knowing about it."

"Oh, yes, you can," laughed Arlington, as he produced a flask. "I think you'll find this stuff all right. Here you are, boys, with my compliments. Don't be afraid of it. It won't hurt you."

"But there are no glasses," said Silkley.

"The nozzle of that flask is clean," smiled Chet. "Drink right out of it. You don't need glasses."

One after another they tipped the flask until it reached Percy Ring. He hesitated and seemed inclined to refuse.

"Oh, say, Ring," cried Chester, "I'll think you're objecting because the stuff is mine! I hope you're not inclined to hold grudges. I'm willing to let the past remain buried and be good friends with all Fardale in the future. Just take a little drink, and I'll know you feel all right toward me."

"Oh, I have no grudge," said Percy, as he tipped the flask.

Now it happened that not one of the others had taken a swallow from the flask, although they all made a pretense of doing so. They had been warned in advance not to drink any of that stuff.

Ring took two or three good-sized swallows.

The result was precisely what Arlington had expected. In a short time Percy's face was flushed, and he grew reckless in his play. How was he to know that the stuff in the flask had been doctored to produce such an effect upon him?

"I've got a streak to-night!" he cried, as he scooped in another pot. "If we were playing a big game I'd break you fellows."



"Great Scott!" laughed Arlington. "You certainly are holding the cards, Ring, old man. That is a pretty tame game, isn't it?"

One of the others suggested that the limit might be raised.

"Oh, no!" cried Silkley; "I'm satisfied."

"Come, come, Vancel!" urged Ring. "I don't often do this, you know. Let's play a real game of poker. As a rule, I play for amusement, but to-night I warn you all that I'm out for blood."

"Well, I don't like to be challenged like this," muttered one of Arlington's accomplices. "I'm willing to shove up the limit. Shall we call it a quarter?"

"Fifty cents suits me better," said Percy.

"Then we'll make it fifty."

After a brief argument this was agreed upon.

"Better play a little while, Arlington," urged Silkley. "I'm not having much luck; I may have to drop out. Ring has it all his own way. If I was winning I wouldn't mind a dollar limit."

But Chet held off a little longer. Finally he glanced at his watch and announced that he would play exactly one hour. Then he moved up and was given a hand.

The flask went round again, and Ring drank more than before.

Two hours later the game broke up with Percy Ring nearly thirty dollars in the hole. Twenty dollars of this money he owed Chester Arlington, who had taken I O U's for it.

The following day Chester Arlington boldly appeared at Fardale Academy and sought a private interview with Percy.

"What do you want?" demanded Ring, pale and apprehensive, after conducting Chet to the privacy of his room. "Have you come to collect your money?"

"My dear fellow I'm half-way decent, even if you don't think I am. I was sorry for you last night when luck went against you, and I helped you out. You must acknowledge that I was rather decent."

"I was a fool!" murmured Percy dejectedly. "I lost my head. I should have known that luck never sticks by a fellow if he begins winning at the outset of a game. It always turns against him."

"As a rule that's right," nodded Arlington. "But don't you worry so much. You lost only six or seven dollars in cash."

"I know I owe you something. How much is it?"

"I haven't looked to see," said Chet, producing some slips of paper. "These are your slips, aren't they? I'll figure it up. I let you have four dollars in the first place, then five more, then another five when you got into that big jack-pot, and finally you had six. That's even twenty."

"Twenty?" groaned Ring. "I can't pay you! What are you going to do with that paper? It's worthless to you, but you can hurt me with it."

"I wouldn't hurt you for the world, Ring. I didn't come here to mention the game. As long as you've mentioned it, I'll make you a proposition. I didn't get hit very hard last night. I want to make a little ar-

rangement with you. I want you to do a favor. I've organized an indoor baseball team at Fairport, and we've been practising on the quiet. I think I've got a pretty good team, too. I want a game of indoor baseball with Fardale, and I want it arranged so we'll play a day or two after Merriwell gets back from his vacation. I happen to know that he's away now. When he gets back and finds you have an indoor baseball team he'll jump right into it. Let him jump. Let him captain the team. He can't get his team into condition to beat us in the short time he'll have. If I can beat Merriwell with my team I'll hand you over these four slips of paper. I'll call the debt canceled. That'll let you out pretty easy, Ring."

"But it's a conspiracy!" muttered Percy. "If it should be found out——"

"Now how is it going to be found out? Don't be foolish, old man. I'll never go round telling people how we fixed it up. I give you my word of honor that I'll never mention it. To-day, to-morrow, or just as soon as possible, get a bunch of fellows together and set them at indoor baseball. Just before Merriwell returns call a meeting of your committee. Fix it so that there'll be no question about Fardale meeting Fairport at indoor baseball a day or two after Merriwell appears on the scene. That's all I want of you. If I knew that you would do this I'd tear these slips up here before your eyes. Think it over. There isn't anything so very bad about this, anyhow. What if Fairport should win the game? No one could blame you. I've told the fellows a dozen times that I was going to down Merriwell, and every time I've made the boast I've failed. I want to play on the regular baseball team this spring. To get there I've got to down Merriwell without delay. When I accomplish this I'll have enough influence and backing to get onto the Fairport nine. Come, Ring, is it a go?"

"Yes," said Percy huskily, "I'll do my best, Arlington. But if you ever breathe a word of this arrangement I'll be mad enough to shoot you."

## CHAPTER VI.

### A DISTINGUISHED GUEST.

On Saturday evening of the following week Doris Templeton entertained Bessie Dale, of Fairport, at the home of Doris' aunt, in Fardale.

Among the girls invited were a number from Lakeside Academy, including, of course, Zona Desmond, Mamie Woodcliffe, and June Arlington.

The invited lads were from Fardale Academy.

Early in the evening one who was not invited boldly appeared and coolly remained. When June Arlington reached the house she was escorted by Chester. June fully expected her brother to leave her at the door, but Chet did nothing of the sort. Instead of that, he brazenly followed her into the house, greeted Doris with friendly effusiveness, and proceeded to slip off his overcoat.



"I just happened to be in town to-night, Miss Templeton," he explained. "Ran over to see June, and she told me she was invited out. Didn't have a chance to talk with her much before she came, so I trotted along with her. I'll stop a little while, if you don't mind."

"Oh, of course not," murmured Doris, feeling it her duty to be polite to him on June's account, although she was troubled by the thought that he would be an unpleasant addition to the party.

June's cheeks were burning, and she quickly found an opportunity to whisper in her brother's ear:

"It's awfully presuming of you, Chester! You weren't invited."

"Oh, well, what of that?" he laughed. "I've known Doris a long time. She doesn't mind."

"But there'll be lots of fellows present who don't like you, and that will make it very unpleasant."

"For them possibly," chuckled Chet. "I shan't mind it a bit."

"I'd remained away and apologized to Doris for not coming if I'd dreamed you'd do such a thing," declared the vexed girl.

"Oh, you're finicky, sis. You have queer notions in that little head of yours. I tell you it's all right. Merriwell isn't here, is he?"

"No, I think not. He hadn't returned to Fardale the last I knew. Brad Buckhart arrived to-day, but something detained Dick."

"Well, as long as Merriwell isn't around things will pass off smoothly. You see if they don't. If he were here I might feel like giving him a poke or two, which would stir up trouble, in case he got mad. I don't mind these other fellows. As for Buckhart, I'll ignore him. He's nothing but a loud-mouthed cowboy."

"You know he's no cowboy. His father is a cattleman."

"Well, we'll call him a cowboy and let it go at that. Now drop it, sis. Don't say any more about it. Doris is waiting for you. I see Percy Ring in the next room. Think I'll speak to him. Perc isn't such a bad fellow."

Ring looked startled and dismayed as Chester approached.

"How are you?" nodded Arlington familiarly.

"What the dickens are you doing here?" muttered Percy.

"Why, I just dropped in to see some of my old friends, you know."

"Well, for the Lord sake, keep away from me! Somebody will suspect something."

"Oh, no, they won't. They won't suspect half as quickly if we are fairly cordial as they would if we dodged each other. It's all right, Ring. I believe in boldness. The fellow who tries to put a scheme through in a sneaky fashion is liable to attract attention quicker than the chap who is bold and open in his manner."

"Perhaps that's so," admitted the chairman of the Fardale Athletic Committee; "but I don't want to be seen chinning with you."

Turning, he hastened away.

Chet struck a pose, with his hands in his pockets, and surveyed Zona Desmond, who had cornered Myron Pierce and was giving him "a game of talk."

"Most remarkable girl I ever saw. Used to have black hair. It's blond now. Wonderful what a change a little paroxide will make. I used to stand pretty well with her. Think I'll see how the land lies now."

A moment later he was bowing in his most polished manner before Zona. She appeared a trifle startled and bewildered.

"Why, Chester—Chester Arlington, are you here?" she exclaimed.

"Not I," he answered. "This is my ghost."

"Well, it's a healthy looking ghost."

Pierce improved the opportunity, after nodding shortly at Arlington, to murmur an excuse and slip away.

Chet sat down in the place vacated by Myron.

"Got a mash on him, Zona?" inquired Chet smilingly.

"Oh, he's chased me up and bothered me more or less," she answered. "Still, he's awfully slow. He's from Philadelphia, you know. It's awfully queer to see you here to-night. I didn't know Bessie had invited you."

"Didn't you? Well, here I am. I see a few of my dearest enemies are present. There's that cow-puncher fellow glaring at me now. Looks as if he'd like to eat me."

"Don't you know, I can't understand Brad Buckhart," confessed Zona. "He's the queerest fellow I ever met. Why, I'm all mixed up about him. I thought him rude and uncouth, but sometimes he's just as nice and polished as any one."

"Oh, I suppose he can assume the manners of a gentleman at times, even if he isn't one," said Chet.

"But they say he really comes of a fine family."

"Let 'em tell that to the marines!"

"I've been told that he's bluffing when he pretends to be uncouth and talks like a cowboy. Why, he told me that his father was just an ordinary small rancher, whose property was all covered with mortgages; but after that I heard Mr. Buckhart is reckoned as one of the wealthiest cattlemen in the business to-day. They even say he has an interest in one or more of the big packing concerns in Chicago, so that he makes money out of cattle in a double way."

"Who spun that fairy yarn?" laughed Chet. "I've never heard anything about old man Buckhart—that is, anything more than that he's a plain Texas cattleman. Never mind him, anyhow. I'm not interested in the old cowman or his cowboy son. What's going on to-night? This seems to be kind of a sit-around sociable."

"Oh, Doris has promised us a delightful surprise. I don't know just what it is. Here she comes now."

Doris entered the room, accompanied by Hal Darrell. She glanced around to make sure all were pres-



ent. Evidently others had been called from other rooms, for they flocked in, with an air of expectancy.

Darrell pulled out his watch and showed Doris the time. She nodded and smiled.

"My friends," she said, "I've invited you here to-night in honor of Miss Bessie Dale. You all know Bessie."

"If they do not," laughed the Fairport girl, who was something of a joker, "I'll pass among the congregation and introduce myself."

Doris continued:

"I've hinted at a surprise this evening. It's now ten minutes to eight. At eight o'clock we will receive a distinguished visitor, Ivan Rotenvinsky, the famous Russian spiritualistic musician, who happens to be stopping at the Fardale Hotel. It is said that Rotenvinsky is a musical marvel, from the fact that he never took a lesson in his life and in his normal condition cannot play the simplest of tunes. He goes into a trance and plays the music of all the great masters. He's very eccentric in his dress and in all he does. He has promised to arrive here at eight o'clock precisely. Therefore, we may expect him in a short time."

The boys and girls clapped their hands and seemed highly delighted over the prospect, although several of them confessed they had never heard of Ivan Rotenvinsky.

"What, never heard of him?" exclaimed Zona Desmond. "Why, that's singular!"

Chester Arlington laughed heartily.

"Evidently they're not very well posted on the musical prodigies of to-day," he said. "Rotenvinsky is famous through the entire English world. I don't think he's ever visited America before."

Doris Templeton gave Chester an odd look.

"You're right," she nodded. "This is his first visit to this country. I hope we'll all appreciate him. Of course his music may be a little too deep for the most of us to understand, but we must try to be appreciative."

"Oh, we will, we will!" cried the company.

"I'll certainly appreciate it a-plenty," observed Buckhart, "if the gent will just pound off 'Yankee Doodle' or some of those good old tunes."

"Horrors!" cried Doris, flinging up her hands. "You mustn't expect anything like that. He will play selections from Mozart, Wagner, Liszt, and other great masters who are dead. You know it is said that the spirits of these great musicians control him when he plays."

"Oh, is that it?" muttered the Texan, in some disappointment. "Won't he give us any of the popular airs? Don't you suppose we could induce him to pump out 'Everybody Works But Father'?"

"Don't impose on him by mentioning such a thing," urged Doris.

"All right," sighed Brad, "just as you say. You'll see me displaying a heap of enthusiasm, no matter what the foreign gent gives us."

There was a sharp ring at the door-bell.

"That may be he!" exclaimed Doris, all aflutter with excitement, as she hastened into the hall.

By this time the entire party was on the keen edge. Listening, they heard a peculiar rasping voice mingling with the musical tones of Doris.

"Rotty has arrived," muttered Buckhart. "Ready, ladies and gents, to do the grand salaam."

Directly Doris reappeared, accompanied by the distinguished visitor. He was dressed in black, with huge baggy trousers, very small about the ankles, remarkable high-heeled boots, and a Prince Albert coat, with immense flaring skirts. His dress, however, was not his main peculiarity. He had a head of shaggy hair, which was long and disheveled, a part of it actually falling over his eyes in wild confusion. Above his mouth was a bristling mustache, with fierce upward-curling ends. Beneath his mouth there was an imperial that stuck straight out in one stiffly waxed bayonetlike point. Through the veil of hair over the coal-black eyes he glared about at the assembled boys and girls. His manner seemed to indicate that he was on the verge of pouncing on any one of them. Indeed, so startling was his aspect that several girls shrank back, uttering little murmurs of alarm. This seemed to please him, for he thrust one hand into the bosom of his coat and displayed a glimpse of gleaming teeth in a grin that reminded Brad Buckhart of a wildcat.

"My friends," said Doris proudly, "allow me to introduce the great spiritualistic musician, Ivan Rotenvinsky."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE GREAT MUSICIAN PLAYS.

The visitor bowed so low that his wild hair nearly swept the floor.

"To meet me gives you the great pleasuresky," he croaked, in his harsh voice. "It is an honoroff to knowsky me."

In spite of himself Ted Smart snickered outright. He smothered it by clapping his hand over his mouth, then pretended to sneeze violently.

"I'm getting a delightful cold," he said. "I always enjoy a cold. I did think of training for the track team this spring. Thought I'd go into the races. Instead of that, I've decided to catch cold and let my nose run."

The visitor gave Ted a glare.

"Don't mind him, sir," urged Doris quickly. "He can't help it."

"He seemsky like a fooloff," observed the Russian.

By this time the boys and girls had recovered their composure, and they flocked about the visitor, seeking to shake hands with him.

"No, no!" he cried, motioning them back. "I have caresky for the handsky. I never let any one shakesky it."

"Wow! wow!" muttered Buckhart. "How careful



the gent is! I presume he is afraid something will happen to his digits so they can't dance lightly over the ivory keys."

"Welcome, sir," said Darrell. "We're delighted to meet you, and we hope you are enjoying your visit to our country and our little village. We understand you're stopping at the Fardale Hotel."

"Ah-yah," answered Rotenvinsky, nodding until his bushy hair waved like a brush in the air. "The hotelsky stops by me. It is not satisfactionoff it givesky me."

"Is it possible " breathed Hal. "Why, we think we have a very nice hotel."

"It is boom, boom!"

"Is it possible you think our hotel bum? Why, sir, some of the big bugs of the country have stopped there."

"Ah-yah!" cried the Russian. "I foundsky a few of them last nightoff. They were in my bedsky!"

It was Buckhart's turn to laugh, and he followed Smart's example by clapping a hand over his mouth in an attempt to check it. Then he coughed until black in the face and tears started from his eyes.

"You also have a bad coldsky," observed the visitor.

"What do you think of him?" whispered Zona, in Arlington's ear.

"Of all freaks I ever saw, that is the worst," answered Chester guardedly. "It's a singular thing how people take to freaks."

"Oh, but you shouldn't call him a freak until you hear him play. You know all great musicians are eccentric."

"This fellow ought to be in a dime museum," said Chet. "I feel just like soaking him. I'd like to give him a good swift push in the solar plexus."

"Oh, I hope you won't do anything to offend him."

"I'll try not to, but I can't stand much of him."

At this moment Rotenvinsky caught sight of the piano, standing in the corner of the room.

"Ah-aha!" he cried. "It is cheapsky, cheapsky! How can I play on such an instrumentoff?"

"Dear me!" said Doris. "We think it a very good instrument. My aunt paid five hundred dollars for it."

"She get what you call the soaksy," said the visitor, flourishing his hands in the air. "Her I will sellsky one that is not half so goodsy for a thousand dollaroffs."

"Hey?" piped Ted Smart. "I must warn that gentleman. I have that line of talk copyrighted."

"I don't believe he can play a note," muttered Arlington, under his breath.

"Wait until he places himself under the influence of the spirits," urged Zona. "Then he will show you."

Doris now urged her friends to be seated, and they complied.

With jerky strides the visitor advanced upon the piano, seeming ready to make a leap at it. They watched him in great suspense. Suddenly he lifted his clenched fist and struck the keys a resounding blow.

"Goodness!" gasped Doris, in alarm. "He'll smash it!"

"Have not the fearsky," reassured the Russian. "I make a testoff at oncesky. I shall playsky. Silence will be on every one present here. Hush upsky."

He seated himself on the revolving piano stool and clasped his arms across his stomach, bending over in a singular manner until his long hair entirely hid his face.

"He's been eating green apples," whispered Smart. "He's got the colic."

After a few moments strange mutterings began to float out from behind the veil of hair. The sounds were not distinguishable words, or, at least, if they were, no one present understood them. Gradually they changed into a monotonous chant. Of a sudden Rotenvinsky pulled up his feet and spun round on the stool like a top. He continued to spin until those present grew dizzy as they watched. Round and round he went for at least twenty times. When he finally stopped he was facing the piano.

"*Mein Gott!*" he cried. "It is Vogner I now am already! My great tintabrel of der sixteenth convulsion in 'Faust' shall by you be listened."

Lifting both hands, with his fingers outspread, he brought them down with a strange, discordant bang upon the keys. What followed literally astounded nearly every one present, for he began clawing at those keys in a perfectly frantic manner, as if trying to rip them off the piano. From one end of the board to the other he went, his whole body shaking and his head bobbing back and forth at a great rate. He wound one leg round the piano stool as if anchoring himself there, and the sounds which came from the instrument were afterward described by Ted Smart as heart-rending. The piano literally rocked.

Suddenly, in the midst of all this racket, the Russian paused. Then he applied the soft pedal and began to wring uncanny, doleful sounds from the instrument.

"Grand—perfectly grand!" breathed Zona Desmond.

"Grand rot!" sneered Arlington. "I've stood all of this I can. I'm going over there and tell him what I think."

Although Zona tried to restrain him, Chet rose and hastened toward the piano.

At that moment the instrument was wailing in a singular heartbroken manner, and, to the astonishment of every one, a black cat entered the room, with its back arched and its tail up, clawed furiously at the carpet, then made two springs and landed on the keys.

Continuing to play with his left hand, Rotenvinsky seized the cat by the tail with his right and gave her a flourish in the air, whirling her round and round several times, finishing by tossing her onto Arlington.

The howls of the cat mingled with the strange sounds which came from the piano. Pussy was infuriated by such treatment and proceeded to claw Chet with all her might.

Arlington uttered a wild cry and dropped to a sit-



ting position on the floor, striking right and left at the cat, finally knocking the animal off. With a last snarling howl of despair and rage, pussy fled from the room.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### CHET MAKES A MESS OF IT.

The spectacle presented by Chester and the cat caused several of the boys to shout with laughter. Arlington's face and hands were scratched, and he rose to his feet, producing a handkerchief, with which he sought to stanch the flow of blood.

Needless to say he was furious.

"You lunatic!" he palpitated, glaring at Rotenvinsky. "I'm going to tell you just what I think of you!"

But when he tried to do so, the Russian hammered such a terrific burst of sound from the piano that Chet's voice was wholly drowned. Indeed Rotenvinsky seemed utterly oblivious to Arlington's presence.

Zona Desmond rushed forward and seized Chester by one arm, while June caught him by the other, both urging him to come away.

The interference of the girls seemed to increase the boy's rage, for he flung them both aside and seemed on the point of striking the pianist.

Then several of the boys interfered, and Arlington was pushed back.

"Chester, please don't!" implored June. "You're making a fearful scene."

"He flung that cat on me!" grated the infuriated boy. "The beast clawed me!"

Chet was finally suppressed and forced into a corner, where Zona once more took charge of him.

The pianist continued to play, but now the music seemed to be a strange medley of several popular airs, not one of which was clearly distinguishable.

"I'll have a chance to say a few things to him when he gets through!" grated Arlington. "He's an impostor! He has an idea he can fool people, but I'll show him up!"

"Stop, Chester!" warned Zona. "You've always been trying to show some one up. You tried to show Dick Merriwell up, but you haven't succeeded yet."

"I will!" vowed Chet; "I'll show him up yet!"

"Oh, why don't you quit on that line! Can't you ever learn your lesson?"

"I'll teach him a lesson!"

"Now see here," said the girl. "You know I've sympathized with you. I've always thought you pretty clever, but I'm beginning to change my mind. I don't like Merriwell, for he never gives me any attention. All the same, I'm convinced that no boy around here can get ahead of him. You ought to be convinced of that yourself. You've tried and tried and wasted all your time in trying. You can't beat him at anything."

"I'll show you!" muttered Chester. "It won't be

long, either. I know how I can do him up, and I have everything arranged for it. I'll make him look like a plugged nickel. I'm going to beat him within three days after he returns to Fardale."

"At what?"

"Baseball."

"Baseball?" exclaimed Zona, astonished.

"That's what I said."

"But this is not the season for baseball."

"It is for the kind of baseball I mean."

"I don't understand. What kind do you mean?"

"Indoor baseball."

"Why, do they play baseball indoors?"

"Sure. It's a great game nowadays. It can be played wherever there is a hall with an open floor space that is large enough. I've organized an indoor baseball team at Fairport, and we are practising right along. In fact, we have two teams. I'm captain of the regular team, and we play a game with the scrub almost every day. Now, there's a difference between indoor baseball and outdoor baseball."

"What's the difference?"

"Well, the rules are much alike, but when you come to play with a ball sixteen or seventeen inches in circumference, which weighs only eight ounces and is batted with a bat the size of a broomstick, it makes a great change in the game. Not only that, but running bases, fielding, pitching, catching, and almost everything done indoors varies from outdoor's work. The best outdoor player is all at sea the first time he attempts to play indoors. He may pick up the game quickly, but it's my opinion that most clever outdoor players find it no easy thing to become clever at the indoor game."

"This is very interesting," nodded Zona. "But how can you be so confident you're going to get an opportunity to defeat Merriwell?"

"That's all fixed," chuckled Chet, temporarily forgetting his recent discomfiture in thoughts of coming triumph. "Didn't you see me speaking to Percy Ring as I came in?"

"Yes, I noticed it."

"Well, I've got that fellow just where I want him. I'll have my chance at Merriwell. Look here, Zona, don't you say anything about this. I didn't mean to speak about this, but, somehow, I got to talking as soon as you mentioned Merriwell. You won't peach on me, will you?"

"Of course not," she assured him. "I'm not liable to. Look out! Here's June. She'll hear you."

"Oh, I'll look out for that," declared the boy, wagging his head. "Confound that cat! Just look at my handkerchief! Isn't that enough to make a man swear!"

June again seated herself beside her brother.

"What made you create such a scene, Chester?" she whispered regretfully. "You always do something like that."

"Now quit it—quit it!" he growled. "Don't come around trying to call me down! I wanted to show



that freak up, and I'll find a way to do it yet. I know well enough that he flung that cat on me intentionally."

"I hope you won't make any more disturbance. Every one else is delighted with the great pianist."

"Great fakir! He can't play any more than I can!"

"But I thought you said you'd heard of him," put in Doris.

"He's not Rotenvinsky, the Russian musician. Just look at those fools flocking around him now."

The distinguished visitor had finished playing and was again doubled up on his stool in a posture which seemed to indicate a pain in the stomach. The boys and girls gathered about him, uttering words of admiration and praise, but he gave them not a particle of attention, sitting in that strange position for fully three minutes before moving once more.

"Ah!" he suddenly hissed, sitting bolt upright and glaring through the veil of hair. "Where is it that I am nowsky? I have had the marvelous dreamsky."

"That's right," laughed Arlington loudly, "he dreamed he was playing real music."

"It was Vogner," continued Rotenvinsky. "Vogner had me. No more myselfsky I was. Oh, the great inspirationoff! Oh, the wonderful music I could playoff!"

"Were you really in a trance, professor?" asked Doris Templeton, with seeming awe and timidity.

"You call it the trancesky, hey? I tell you no more myselfsky was I. It was Vogner you heard playing the pianooff."

"Now I'm going to show that fakir up!" muttered Arlington, as he rose to his feet and brushed aside Zona's restraining hand. "Don't get excited. I'm not going to jump on him or anything of that sort, but I'll expose him for a cheap fraud."

Pushing into the group, Chester paused before Rotenvinsky and sneeringly observed:

"Yes, that was great music! It was enough to drive any one out of their senses! Had I possessed a revolver, I might have blown my brains out in order to escape the agony."

"You don't need the revolveroff," sighed the Russian, as he produced a tiny round box and quickly removed the cover. "I have here the snuffsky. Take a pinch and sneezesky your brains out."

There was a burst of laughter at Arlington's expense. Once more Chet's face grew crimson, but he did his best to repress a burst of temper. Seeking an opening through which he could retaliate on the Russian, he unguardedly asked:

"How long can a man live without brains?"

"You ought to knowsky," said the pianist.

## CHAPTER IX.

BY UNSEEN HANDS.

Ted Smart dropped on a convenient chair and sobbed with joy.

"Oh, isn't Chester putting it all over him!" gasped the little fellow. "It fills me with untold anguish!"

"I'm going to tell you what I think of you!" grated Arlington, shaking a finger at Rotenvinsky. "You're a common fakir! You're no spiritualistic musician! You do these stunts to deceive people and make them think you can play. Any one can sit down and hammer discords out of a piano."

"It is the fine ear for music you have on your headoff!" said the distinguished visitor, with biting sarcasm. "So you thinksky I am no spiritualistic marveloff? Ah-ha! I will provesky it. I will givesky the great exhibitionoff of my wonderful powersky. You must all sit aroundsky and be stillsky. From your lipsoff not a soundsky must get awaysky. If I failsky to make the convictionoff, a fraud I will confession that I amsky."

"Oh, let's do it—let's do it!" exclaimed Doris. "Let's see what he can do! Come, everybody get seats and be quiet."

"Yes, let's see what the great fake can do," laughed Arlington. "I'll guarantee he'll expose himself before he's through."

Following Rotenvinsky's directions, the boys and girls moved all the chairs back to form a circle around the room. The Russian then asked that the piano lamp should be extinguished and the other lights turned very low. He saw to it himself that these lights were dimmed until objects in the room became faint and indistinct.

"Nowsky," hissed the strange man, as he seized a rocking-chair, which, at his request, had been left unoccupied, and drew it into the center of the circle; "nowsky I will call upon the spooksky to come hitheroff! One moment moresky. I want that tableoff."

He seized a small table and placed it near the chair.

"Now hush upskey!" he hissed. "Not a murmuroff! Not a soundsky!"

Although it seemed rather ridiculous, not a few were impressed by the manner of the man and the dimness of the light. All were staring intently at the chair and table. They saw Rotenvinsky stand near these two pieces of furniture and slowly wave his hands over them. Having done this, the man began to mutter in a language understood by no one present, at the same time backing away slowly, with his outstretched hands still making mystic passes in the air. Having retreated fully five feet from the table and chair, he finally paused and made a polite bow to them.

"Ah-yah!" he rasped, in a mingled whisper and mutter. "I have the great honoroff to bow before my mastersky, Beethoven, who sits in yonder chairsky."

Immediately, to the astonishment of nearly every one, the chair moved slightly and began to rock.

The girls snuggled closer to their male companions, staring at the moving chair.

"I'm gladskey to see you again, my mastersky," murmured Rotenvinsky, continuing to bow. "I hopeskey you are comfortableoff in that chairsky."



The chair rocked still more violently.

"There is only one way in which spookskys can communicate with those who remain in the fleshky," continued the Russian. "It is by the knocksky. If you are there, you will give us the three knockskys on the tableoff."

Needless to say, what followed caused more than one in the party to give a jump, for three distinct raps were heard upon the table.

Zona Desmond seized Chester Arlington's arm, whispering nervously in his ear:

"What do you think of that? what do you think of that?"

"Keep still!" warned Chet. "I'm trying to get onto his game. I'm trying to find out how he does it."

Rotenvinsky now expressed his great pleasure that the supposed spirit had so promptly answered him. Once more bowing in his profoundest manner and looking most uncanny in the dim light, he wildly waved his hands in the air as he implored the unseen visitor to take a seat at the piano and play.

"If so you will dosky," he said, "be kind enough to knocksky three more times on the tableoff."

There were three sharp answering raps on the table.

Still bowing and gesturing, Rotenvinsky advanced toward the chair, which ceased to rock. He extended a hand, as if to assist the unseen person in that chair. Then he moved toward the piano, his manner seeming to indicate that he was escorting some one. Having left this mystic individual at the piano, the Russian slowly retreated to the center of the room, where, with outstretched hands, he turned to the boys and girls and whispered:

"Hushsky! hushsky! You shall hear my master playsky."

And now came the greatest marvel of all, for, with no human being sitting on the stool, with no human hands touching the keys, the piano began playing Beethoven's greatest sonata. This was music! Not even the skepticism of Chester Arlington could deny that Beethoven's greatest composition was being played on that instrument.

Standing beneath the chandelier, Rotenvinsky was seen to reach upward and gently turn on a little more light. Then he stretched his hand toward the piano, at the keyboard of which he pointed. Staring at the keyboard, the boys and girls were able plainly to see the keys moving, as if ghostly fingers were tripping over them.

It was an experience never to be forgotten by those present. Some were too frightened to move. Others longed to scream, but their tongues seemed benumbed and frozen in their mouths. And thus they sat while the mysterious man who had brought this about stood afar from the piano, his hand stretched toward it, and Beethoven's sonata was played to its magnificent finish.

As the last note died away Rotenvinsky quickly turned the lights on.

"You have seensky!" he cried. "You have heardsky! I have given you the proofsky!"

## CHAPTER X.

### THE MYSTERY EXPLAINED.

Unconvinced, vexed, perplexed, and thoroughly dissatisfied, Chester Arlington remained silent.

On the other hand, Percy Ring rose to his feet, his face very pale, muttering:

"It's enough for me! I'm going to get out of here!"

"Holdsky!" commanded the Russian, with one up-lifted hand. "It is not yet that you may departoff."

"I'd like to know why not!" said Ring. "Can't I go if I want to?"

"It would break the magic circlesky. No more could I accomplishoff."

"Thunder and lightning! I think you've accomplished enough now!"

"One more thingsky I do," announced the mysterious visitor. "Among you there is one personoff whose mind I shall readsky. Ha! you are that one! Stand stillsky. Don't moveoff."

"I'd move off if I could get a chance to run!" muttered Percy, glancing despairingly toward the nearest door.

"No harmsky will I do," promised Rotenvinsky; "but into your heartskey I will lookoff. I will seesky the things you thinksky."

Glaring through the mass of bushy hair before his eyes, the Russian slowly advanced toward Percy, making a few more mystic movements with his hands.

In spite of himself, Ring could not take his gaze from those two dark eyes which he saw staring at him through the veil of hair. They gave him a peculiar sensation of weakness and numbness. This feeling ran over him from his head to his feet. In that moment he became convinced that those eyes were looking straight down into his innermost soul.

"Ah-ha!" breathed the Russian, pausing close to Percy. "Now I seesky all your thoughts opened to me like a booksky. On the pages of that booksky are writtenoff all the bad deedsky you have done. What is thisky I beholdoff? It is a terrible blotsky! What fearful crime have you done? Your very soulsky you have bartered off with the evil onesky. He has you in his powersky. Unless confessionoff you makesky, he will lead you to your ruinsky."

To the amazement of every one present, Percy suddenly dropped on his knees, wildly crying:

"It's true! it's true! The evil one is Chet Arlington! He has me in his power, but I'll confess—I'll confess!"

With a snarl of rage Chester sprang forward and seized Ring by the throat.

"Shut up, you idiot!" he hissed. "Don't be fright-



ened in such a foolish manner! Keep your mouth shut, or I'll choke you!"

A strong hand seized Arlington by the collar and gave him a snap which sent him across the room.

"Hold on!" cried a voice, that had a familiar ring. "Perhaps this joke has gone far enough. I don't want to kick up any more trouble to-night."

It was the Russian who spoke, and, as he spoke, he swept off his wonderful wig, casting it on the table. Following this, with a deft hand, he removed the false mustache and imperial that had made the finishing touch to his disguise.

There was a shout of astonishment, followed by a great burst of laughter, for Dick Merriwell stood before them.

"Our little game has been most entertaining, Doris," he said; "but unfortunately an unexpected visitor has created some trouble."

Brad Buckhart rushed forward, with both fists clenched, an expression of ferocity on his rugged face.

"Pard," he palpitated, "I'm going to thump you! I've got to do it! So this is the way you deceive your bosom friend! You send me home ahead of you, saying that you are detained by important business. Then you sneak into town and play this sort of a practical joke on us. I can't lay violent hands on your confederate, Doris Templeton, for she's a girl. But I can hammer you!"

Laughingly Dick held up his open hands.

"Go ahead," he said. "If you feel as bad as that over it, I'll take my medicine."

"Oh, say, Dick—oh, say, how did you do it?" cried a dozen voices, as the wondering boys and girls crowded about him. "How did you make the chair rock? How did you produce that knocking? How did you make the piano play?"

"Ask Doris," chuckled Dick. "It was almost too easy. She rocked the chair for me with the black thread she had hitched to it. Just look under the table, and you'll find the tick-tack. There's another thread hitched to that. She sat over in the corner and manipulated the threads."

"Say," came from Ted Smart, "we're a bright lot of chumps, aren't we? Why, on my soul, I had ice cakes floating up and down my spine all through that séance. It was a delightful sensation!"

"Here's the thread tied to the chair!" cried Mamie Woodcliffe.

"And here's the tick-tack under the table!" said Hal Darrell, as he ripped it off and held it up for inspection.

"But the piano—the piano playing! You couldn't make the piano play in that way," came from several of the unsatisfied ones.

Dick seized one end of the heavy piano, which stood across a corner of the room, and moved it out a bit.

"Come out now," he invited. "It's all over. You must be tired."

A village boy, about ten years of age, crept out from behind the piano, grinning broadly.

"By jinks!" he said, "my legs are pretty nigh broke. It had me awfully cramped in there."

"Here's the spirit who played the piano," said Dick.

"But how could he do it?" they continued to question.

The piano was an upright. Above the keys in the front of the upper part was a door about a foot square, which Doris now proceeded to open. In doing this she revealed the manner in which the deception had been perpetrated, for she exposed to view a roll of paper music such as is generally used on a pianola or any mechanical piano player.

"This is one of the new pianos, built with the automatic player inside of it," she explained. "As a rule, this door is left open, so that the operator can watch the music and operate the soft and loud pedals. On this occasion we arranged it with a composition of Beethoven ready to be played and closed the door. Our assistant here"—referring to the boy—"was thoroughly drilled so that he knew just when to operate the treads, which may be done from behind by the hands. When Dick got through playing he adjusted the instrument so that the interior player would work the moment the treads were put in motion. Now you understand everything, and I think we've had a jolly lot of fun."

"Well, if I can't punch you, pard," breathed Buckhart, "I'm certain going on the war-path for the galoot who raised the rumpus."

But when he looked round for Chester Arlington, to his surprise he found that Chet had slipped out of the room and was gone from the house. Realizing how ridiculous he had made himself, Arlington had not remained long after Merriwell's unmasking.

## CHAPTER XI.

### AFTER THE PARTY.

When the party broke up that night Brad Buckhart found it necessary, as a matter of politeness and courtesy, to act as Zona Desmond's escort.



This was not a pleasant task for the Texan, but he gallantly concealed the fact that there was anything disagreeable in it.

On returning to the academy he found Dick in their room.

"I didn't know but you would remain awhile and talk it over with Doris about how you made a lot of chumps out of us!" growled the Texan. "I don't mind getting fooled, pard, but it does seem as if you might have given me a little hint."

"And spoiled the fun," smiled Merriwell. "I had no right to give it away. It wasn't my scheme. Doris planned the whole thing."

"Partner, she's clever. All the same, if you hadn't been a rattling good actor, the thing would have proved a fizzle. I swear I was a-plenty suspicious. It didn't seem to me Russians actually talked in that manner. You certainly flung in a lotsky of rotoff."

"I thought Arlington was going to nip the joke in the bud," confessed Dick. "When he pranced over to the piano I had an idea he was onto me and meant to pull off that wig. The cat didn't seem to enjoy my music. She objected and hopped into the game at the psychological moment. I promptly pulled pussy's tail and threw her onto Chet. Oh, ha! ha! ha! It certainly was a spectacle, and I had to chew my tongue to keep from shouting with laughter. There was Arlington on the floor, with the cat clawing and howling, while he struck right and left in an endeavor to knock her off."

"Say, partner, what's that fellow sneaking around here so much for, anyway?"

"Tell me."

"Well, I tried to pump Zona Desmond after we left the party. He told her something to-night, although I couldn't seem to get anything definite out of her. He's got a few cards up his sleeve, and he's laying for you, Dick."

"I suspected as much," nodded Merriwell. "The moment I arrived, Doris met me at the door and told me Arlington was there. She also told me that Arlington had shown a lot of friendliness toward Ring, who didn't seem to appreciate it. I set my wits to working, and the result was my attempt to read Ring's mind. That wasn't on the program, you know. I rang it in as an extra. I saw the fellow was scared by those monkey shines, and so I pretended to read his mind. I might have told any fellow the same thing, but I have a notion that I struck home."

"I should say you did!" agreed Brad. "Why, Percy

just flopped down on his knees, and, howling that he was going to confess, acknowledged he was in the power of the evil one and that the evil one was Arlington. Now what do you suppose that means?"

"Just at present you know as well as I do. I'm going to have a talk with Ring."

"When?"

"First thing in the morning."

"Too bad you couldn't follow it up to-night. I'll bet he'd tell everything."

"Perhaps he'll tell to-morrow, if I get hold of him before Arlington does. I ought to do that, for Chester can't come prowling round here too early."

Gradually Brad's annoyance over the fact that he had been deceived, as well as the others, wore off, and he was inclined to chuckle good-naturedly as they discussed the amusing events of the evening. Even after retiring at the sound of taps, the Texan lay in bed and burst into occasional spasms of suppressed laughter. Dick finally fell asleep, with Brad still laughing.

In the meantime, Percy Ring had told his roommate, Vance Silkley, of the happenings at the party. Silkley listened with mild interest until Percy related how Merriwell had attempted to read his mind and had accused him of being in the power of the evil one.

"I suppose you'll laugh, Vance," said Ring, shamefacedly, "but I acknowledge I was shivering all over. That fellow is certainly a rattling actor, for he fooled every one of us. You should have seen his eyes as he advanced toward me, glaring through that wild tangle of hair. My goodness! they were like daggers! I could feel them stabbing me! I could feel them looking into my brain and reading my thoughts!"

"Oh, rot!" sneered Silkley, with a gesture of disgust.

"There's no rot about it!" snapped Ring. "Merriwell has a pair of the most piercing eyes I ever saw. Under ordinary circumstances they make a fellow feel as if he could read any one's mind. When he talked to me that way I lost control of myself and just owned up that I was in the power of the evil one, and I accused Arlington of being that one."

"You're a confounded ass, Ring!" yawned Vance. "So you blurted out the whole thing, did you?"

"You may call me an ass if you want to!" retorted Percy, as he paced the floor. "I couldn't help it. I didn't really know what I was saying. Of course, I made a fool of myself."

"That's natural," said Silkley. "Did you tell anything else?"



"I didn't have a chance. Arlington was furious. He jumped at me and grabbed me by the throat. Ugh! I can feel his fingers on my windpipe now!"

"Choked you, did he? Well, I don't blame him. You nearly gave away the whole scheme. Oh, I know about it, Ring—Arlington told me. You've got it all fixed up so that he expects to down Merriwell at indoor baseball next Wednesday. You haven't announced the game yet, but you have made the arrangements for it. I don't suppose you said enough to put Merriwell wise to the job, did you?"

"Tell you I didn't have a chance. There's no telling what I might have said if Arlington hadn't jumped on me."

"Well, now I want to give you a bit of advice. I won't charge you anything for it. It's likely you said enough to make Merriwell suspect something. He may try to pump you. If he does, give him the laugh. Tell him you were helping him out in his little game. Tell him you saw he didn't take to Arlington, so you pretended to make a confession which implicated Chet. Just say it was all rot, and stick to it. You can't afford to tell the truth."

"That's right!" groaned Percy. "If I did, Arlington might come down on me with those I O U's. I'll take your advice, Vance. I'll lie like a trooper!"

## CHAPTER XII.

### RING OWNS UP.

The following afternoon, as was his custom on Sunday at Fardale, Dick started out for a walk.

Buckhart accompanied him.

"Have you succeeded in getting next to Ring, pard?" inquired the Texan.

Dick laughed.

"Evidently Ring has taken to his hole and pulled it in after him," he said. "I haven't been able more than to catch a glimpse of him to-day. He dodged me then, and I haven't seen him since. He wasn't in his room when I called, and Silkley did not know where he could be found."

"I'll guarantee that Silkley is a prevaricator by the clock! Funny thing those two chaps should take to rooming together. Ring has always been all right, but I never fancied he had a good stiff backbone."

"The trouble with Percy," said Dick, "is that he's easily influenced. He likes to be popular, and for that reason we've not had much trouble in getting along with him. He goes with the tide."

"You've figured him out a whole lot correct, partner. He goes with the tide. If the tide happened to set against you, it would carry Percy along. That fellow Silkley is some smooth and cunning. I think he had an ax to grind when he took to rooming with Ring."

"I haven't seen Arlington around the academy to-day."

"Nor I. I opine he felt a heap mortified over last night and kept away. It's likely he's wearing plaster over those scratches."

"That fellow can't stay away from Fardale. Something keeps pulling him back here."

"Oh, he's got a knife up his sleeve, and he's waiting to use it on you. Up to date, every time he's tried to stick you, he's made a mess of it."

After walking into town, as if by mutual consent, they turned their footsteps toward Lakeside Academy. On the way thither they met two girls.

"Somebody we know," muttered the Texan. "I couldn't mistake that pair. The tall one is Mamie Woodcliff, and her companion is——"

"June!" said Dick.

The boys lifted their caps as the girls approached.

"What strange power led us hither?" laughed Dick. "I felt something drawing me toward Lakeside Academy."

"Doris doesn't return until to-morrow morning," said June. "She's still at her aunt's. Haven't you wandered in the wrong direction?"

"Oh, I think not. I saw Darrell setting out by his lonesome half-an-hour before we started."

"And you didn't care?" murmured June.

"I'm not his guardian."

"But you don't answer me. You're evading the point."

"Did you observe any signs of distress at the party last night when Darrell clung so close to Doris?"

"I don't know what you called the sounds you hammered out of that piano, but to me they were certainly sounds of distress."

"Oh, what a sell that was!" laughed Mamie Woodcliff. "I confess I'm no musical expert. I enjoy popular airs, but classical music is a little too much for me. I've heard a great deal about Wagner's eccentricity in composition, and I really thought it might be music when you thumped that terrible medley of sounds out of the piano. Therefore, I clasped my hands, rolled up my eyes and murmured, 'Heavenly!' Everybody else was doing the same, but I'll guarantee the most of us wanted to plug up our ears."



She turned on Brad, at whom she shook one gloved finger.

"Why didn't you tell me?" she exclaimed sternly. "Why didn't you let me know we were being fooled in that manner?"

"Great horn spoon!" laughed the Texan. "I didn't know it myself. I sure had a bad attack of heart-failure when my pard yanked off his disguise. It was a terrible shock. You hear me gently murmur!"

Mamie and Brad fell to chatting over the events of the previous evening, while June gently touched Dick's arm and drew him somewhat aside.

"I had the queerest experience last night, Dick," she half whispered. "I've been wanting to tell you. I don't know just what to make of it. You know I'm rooming with Zona now. After we returned to the academy she was awfully queer. Said she had a secret, but I couldn't get a word out of her. Some time in the night I awoke and found her talking in her sleep. What do you think she was saying?"

"I haven't an idea," confessed Merriwell.

"She was talking about you."

"Me?"

"Yes."

"I'm flattered."

"You needn't be. She wasn't saying complimentary things."

"Now my vanity is hurt."

"When Zona gets to talking in her sleep it's easy to pump her. All one has to do is to ask her questions, and she answers them. Just for fun, I began to question her. She seemed to think she was talking with my brother. Over and over she repeated a promise that she wouldn't tell some sort of a secret. Of course, I knew this was the secret she'd hinted about before we retired. When I urged her to tell me, she answered: 'Why, you just told me all about it, Chester. You're going to beat him. I hope you do.' Then she said a lot of other things about indoor baseball. What's indoor baseball, Dick?"

"Why, it's a game they play in large halls and rinks."

"Then I'm sure my brother has organized an indoor baseball team and thinks he's going to defeat Fardale at that game. Right in the midst of my questioning, just when I felt sure I'd learn everything, Zona awoke. She asked me if she'd been talking in her sleep. I told her she had, and she appeared real angry. Now I don't know what you can make out of this, Dick. There's some sort of a scheme behind it. You're always open and aboveboard in everything you do, and

I don't think it right for my brother to try any under-hand tricks. That's why I've told you about this queer business."

Dick laughed.

"It don't seem to be such a serious matter after all," he said. "Of course, I appreciate your interest, June, and I am much obliged to you."

"Come on, you two," called Buckhart. "Let's all stroll along. You can do a heap of chinning while we preambulate."

It was growing dark when Dick and Brad returned to the academy. Leaving the Texan chatting with some boys on the steps, Chet ran up-stairs.

In the corridor he encountered a boy, who attempted to dodge past him.

In a moment Dick had the fellow by the shoulder.

"Hello, Ring!" he exclaimed. "Where've you kept yourself all day? I've been looking for you."

"Have you?" said Percy, shrugging his shoulders and assuming an indifferent air.

"Didn't Silkley tell you?"

"Oh, seems to me he did say you were round to the room."

"Well, you know I'm not in the habit of going round there unless it's something of importance that brings me."

"That's right," half sneered Ring. "You're not at all sociable unless you're looking after your own interests."

"Now I don't like that, old man," declared Merriwell quietly.

"Perhaps you don't. Perhaps I shouldn't be so outspoken and truthful."

"What's the matter with you, Ring? You're not yourself."

"Oh, I don't know. I think I helped you out in your great joke last night."

"Helped me out?"

"Yes. Didn't I fall on my knees and pretend to confess when you accused me of such horrible crimes? Wasn't that satisfactory to you?"

"I presume you knew at that time it was a joke. You were onto me. Is that what you mean?"

"I'm no chump," declared Ring. "I've got sense enough to know any Russian musician wouldn't make up in such a freak rig and wouldn't talk in that manner."

"All right," said Dick, "we'll let it go at that. We'll acknowledge that you were onto me. Now, I want to ask you a question or two. What's this business about indoor baseball?"



In spite of himself, Ring started slightly.

"Why, what business do you mean?" he questioned.

"You know what I mean. What sort of a job have you put up with Chester Arlington?"

"No job at all!" indignantly exclaimed Ring. "I hope you're not accusing me of anything underhand?"

"I'm making no accusations just now. I'm asking questions. I want to know what it is about indoor baseball that is being kept secret."

"Why, don't you know we have a team here at Fardale? You've been away, but I supposed the fellows had told you since you returned. Of course, you'll get into the game? They expect you to. They want you as captain of the team."

"That's all right. But where does Chester Arlington come in? Come now, Ring, give it to me straight. What have we to do with Chester Arlington?"

Thus cornered, Percy decided on a bold course.

"I don't know just what you're driving at, Merriwell," he said. "I understand Arlington is captain of the Fairport team, and we've made arrangements to play them in the Fardale Rink next Wednesday evening."

Dick whistled softly.

"Oh, you have?" he cried. "I suppose the boys know all about this?"

"They will to-morrow morning. They will be notified the very first thing in the morning."

"How long since the arrangements have been made for the game?"

"Oh, they were not definitely settled until recently."

"And we are to have two whole days' notice before the day of the game!" muttered Dick. "How long have the boys been practising?"

"They've practised off and on for a week or so."

"Off and on. What do you mean by that? How many times have they met for regular practise?"

Again Ring shrugged his shoulders.

"How do I know? Once or twice, I presume."

"How long has Arlington's Fairport team been in practise?"

"You'd better ask him."

"Look here, Percy Ring," said Dick, placing both hands on the fellow's shoulders, "if you have been entering into secret negotiations with the enemy, you'd better resign from the athletic committee."

"I won't resign!" said Percy angrily. "Don't think you can boss everybody around this school!"

"I think I've discovered the nigger in the woodpile," said Dick. "As a game, indoor baseball is like outdoor baseball, but still there's a difference. In order

to play the indoor game well, a team must have lots of practise. Those fellows at Fairport have been practising until they're well up on the game, and I'll wager something on that. We're not prepared to meet them on such short notice. Have the other members of the committee agreed to this date?"

"I don't fancy any one thinks I made all the arrangements of my own accord!" sneered Percy. "Of course they've agreed. Come, Merriwell, don't let any one know we're afraid of Fairport. You don't have to play, you know, unless you want to. You can keep out of it. It may look as if you were afraid to play, but it's nothing to me."

Dick felt like shaking the insolent fellow.

"You've made a big mistake, Ring, and you'll be sorry for it some time. Of course, if arrangements have been made for this game, and the date definitely set, we'll play Fairport, even if we lose. If we do lose, you'll be responsible to some extent, and I fancy you'll have some explanations to make. Putting two and two together, I should say that, in some unknown manner, Arlington has succeeded in getting a line on you. Beware of that fellow, Ring. Break his grip at once, or he'll entangle you and disgrace you. Good night."

Dick passed on toward his room.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### ARLINGTON'S THREE-BAGGER.

In high spirits, Chester Arlington brought his indoor baseball team to Fardale. He had organized the team to suit himself, with the result that the best baseball players of Fairport had been excluded. Chester was the big chief of his tribe, and they unquestionably obeyed all his commands.

It must not be supposed that the team was weak on account of dropping so many outdoor players. On the contrary, Arlington had found a lot of clever chaps, who rapidly developed into good men under his teaching and guidance. As youngsters and school-boys, they could play the indoor game for all it was worth.

Rand Blacklock, Arlington's confidential friend, was third baseman on the team, and they secured rooms together at the Fardale Hotel.

"Oh, I'm feeling like a prince, Rand!" laughed Chet. "This is going to be my day of triumph. I was afraid Merriwell would show the white feather when he found out that the game was going to be pulled off so soon. His conceit kept him from backing out. He's



going to play, and I have it straight that he'll be captain of the team. We'll beat those duffers to a white froth. I'm going to give Merriwell the merry ha-ha when it's all over."

"I hope there's no slip-up," said Ring.

"Slip-up?" cried Chet contemptuously. "How can there be? My boy, we've got the team to wallop 'em. Even if they were in practise and perfect condition, we ought to beat them. I'm literally tingling with eagerness to get at them. By Jove! I'd like a drink."

"Now hold on, Arlington," cautioned Rand, "don't you take anything. Let it alone to-day. It might be a bad thing for you if you began drinking."

"Rot! You have a lot of old-fashioned notions, Rand, my boy. Merriwell has such ideas. Thinks no one should ever take a drink. Now I know for a fact that a drink or two just before a game keys me up to a fine point, and I can play like a fiend. Of course, it would be bad if I hit it up hard, but I know just how far to go."

"I've seen fellows like that before. They all think they know just how far to go and just when to stop, but lots of them misgauge their capacity. I'm not making this talk from a moral standpoint, for, as far as I'm concerned, I have no scruples concerning drink. If I wanted to drink, I should do so. I don't want to, so I let it alone."

"And you don't get any credit for your exemplary behavior, old man. You ought to go round and tell how you're tempted and what an effort it is to resist temptation. Then you'd win a lot of sympathy. If you tell people you're never tempted to do wrong, they won't give you credit for doing right."

"I object to those two words, right and wrong, Arlington. Who can say what is right and what is wrong? Just because a lot of people think it wrong to drink, it's branded as wrong. Between you and me, I rather admire the independent chap who follows his own inclinations and does as he likes."

"There you are!" cried Chet triumphantly. "Now why shouldn't I take a drink if I want to? Just answer that."

Blacklock realized that he had involved himself in an argument that might go against him because of his own admission.

"It's not the right or wrong of it that I'm arguing about, Chester," he said gravely. "I'm figuring on your desire to beat Merriwell. If it was a sure thing that you could take one drink—we'll say two—and no more, why, there might be no harm in it."

"Then you insinuate that I can't stop when I want

to, do you? That makes me tired! I want you to understand that I'm a fellow who can master himself. Just to prove it, I'm going to have a drink."

In vain Blacklock remonstrated. Chester laughingly turned his own argument against him and insisted on taking the drink, which he finally did.

The boys ate supper at the hotel, and Chet was ravenously hungry. Liquor had aroused a false appetite, and he was not the chap to restrain himself in his desires.

"I'm going to show that this training table business is a mistake," he laughed. "Any one who has studied baseball knows that professionals eat and drink just about what they like. It doesn't hurt them. At school they put a fellow on a line of fodder that's supposed to fit him for anything. There's an old saying that one man's food is another man's poison. I don't believe any one can tell nine or ten ball players just what they should eat and have the course thus marked out agree with the whole bunch. Go ahead, boys, and eat what you like."

Blacklock was sitting at Chet's side, and he gave him a nudge.

"Let up on that, Arlington," he whispered. "You're talking too much. The fellows will tumble to it that you have been drinking."

This warning came a bit too late, for already several of the team suspected the truth. This suspicion caused a feeling of uneasiness among them.

The game was scheduled to begin at eight o'clock. Long before the doors of the rink were opened a great crowd had gathered, clamoring for admission. They poured into the hall and made a rush for the best seats in the balcony, which were rapidly filled.

In the middle of the balcony seats had been reserved for musicians from the Fardale Cadet Band. While waiting for the game to begin, these players rendered several lively airs, calculated to arouse enthusiasm.

Arlington's team had been followed to Fardale by a dozen or more enthusiastic admirers, who assembled in a body and prepared to do their best in the way of cheering.

The home team was the first to appear on the spacious floor, where the diamond was marked out according to the requirements of the game.

The cadets greeted their representatives with a ringing cheer.

The boys began practising at once.

Five minutes later Arlington's team made its appearance. The Fairport lads in the balcony rose and yelled lustily.



Chester looked up, smiled, nodded, and waved his hand. His cheeks were flushed, and his eyes shining. Never in all his life had he appeared more full of energy and confidence. He was bubbling over with good nature as he talked to his players, who were preparing to take their turn at practise.

The home team having finished practising, Dick called them from the floor and gave Fairport an opportunity.

The practise work of the Fairport players seemed far cleverer than that of Fardale. Every man appeared to be alive to his responsibilities, and they went at the work with ginger and enthusiasm.

The umpire was an Eaton man, agreed upon by both teams.

Fardale decided to take the floor, and Fairport went to bat in the first inning.

The two teams lined up as follows:

FAIRPORT.	FARDALE.
Arlington, p.	Smart, ss.
Stilton, 1st b.	Bradley, 3d b.
Carew, ss.	Black, cf.
Blacklock, 3d b.	Darrell, 1st b.
Eccles, rf.	Gardner, 2d b.
Knowles, c.	Jolliby, lf.
Raleigh, lf.	Tubbs, rf.
Sanderson, 2d b.	Buckhart, c.
Werner, cf.	Merriwell, p.

The thing that Arlington most desired took place, for Merriwell went into the box to pitch.

Chet had placed himself at the head of the batting list, and he selected his bat, the visiting rooters in the balcony giving him a cheer.

"Get right after Merriwell," urged Blacklock. "Give him his bumps at the start."

Chet nodded and stepped out to the home plate. He wore a confident smile as he prepared to strike.

Without any preliminary movements, Dick pitched the first ball and Arlington landed on it fairly, hitting it a savage crack.

There was a yell of satisfaction as the ball sailed past Chip Jolliby, who barely touched it with his fingers.

Down to first raced Arlington, turning toward second and crossing that bag at full speed, finally reaching third before Jolliby could return the ball to the diamond.

"Wow! wow! wow!" howled an excited Fairport lad in the balcony. "A three-bagger right off the reel! Merriwell gets his medicine to-night!"

"Merriwell gets his medicine to-night!" chorused the others.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### FAIRPORT'S FINE START.

Stilton was the next batter.

"Keep it up, Stilt!" shouted Knowles, who was coaching. "We've got 'em going! We'll win in the first inning! Get a lead, Arlington! You can steal home!"

"It will break my heart if he does!" sobbed Ted Smart, spitting on his hands and dancing about in his position. "Please don't steal home, Arlington! I beg you not to steal home!"

Twice Dick forced Chester back to third.

"Keep him throwing," laughed Knowles. "He'll throw it into the balcony in a moment."

Finally Merriwell delivered the ball to Stilton.

It was a low ball, with a slow curve, and seemed to be exactly what the batter wanted, for he bunted it toward third, and Arlington came dashing in to the plate with the first score.

Bradley fell all over himself in his anxiety to get the ball and throw Stilton out. Although Dick tried to prevent Billy from throwing, the Cockney sent the sphere across to Darrell.

It was a bad throw, and Stilton raced on to second base.

"Well! well! well!" howled the loud-voiced Fairportite in the balcony. "This is too easy!"

With a smile, Chester again looked up and nodded. "Didn't I tell you so!" he cried.

While Gardner was holding the ball and keeping Stilton on second, Dick walked over to Bradley, to whom he spoke in a low tone.

"Be careful about that," he cautioned. "Wild throwing is just as bad in the indoor game as it is in the outdoor game."

"Hi'm a 'owling idiot!" said the cockney youth in disgust. "Hi ought to know better, Dick."

"That's all right," said Merriwell. "Just watch out in the future."

"Lace it out, Carew!" urged Knowles. "Keep it going!"

Carew did his best to "lace it out," but made a foul tip, which was caught by Buckhart, who promptly snapped it down to Bradley.

Stilton had obtained a start when the ball was pitched, and he slid under Billy, reaching third in safety.\*

"Oh, it's just as easy—just as easy!" shouted Knowles.

\*In indoor baseball, a base-runner can advance on a foul tip caught the same as on a regular strike when the ball did not touch the bat.



Not a few of the Fardale spectators began to believe that it was easy for Fairport. In the balcony there were mutterings of disappointment.

"Merriwell can pitch in the outdoor game," sneered Fred Preston; "but he's out of his element in this sort of a game! They'll pound him to death!"

"I believe you're right," grinned Clint Shaw. "Let them pound him! What do we care!"

"Hush!" cautioned Tom Walker, who was sitting with them. "The fellows will hear you. They'll get sore on us."

"They're getting sore already," snickered Preston. "Just hear them growl."

In truth, not a few of the Fardale lads were growling. Two or three openly declared that Merriwell was making a mistake by trying to pitch. They expressed a conviction that Darrell should be sent into the box.

"Oh, wait, you kickers," advised Horace Logan, as Dick delivered the ball again, and Carew missed it. "That's two strikes on that fellow. Merriwell will strike him out."

A moment or two later Logan changed his mind, for Carew hit the ball and sent it skimming along the floor.

Ted Smart blocked the ball, but it bounded away from him, and Stilton scored, while Carew reached first.

"We told you what we'd do!" yelled the excited Fairport boy in the balcony. "We'll get half-a-hundred in this inning if you keep Merriwell in the box!"

"Take him out!" shouted a Fardale boy.

Instantly half-a-dozen fellows batted him over the head and silenced him.

It was now Blacklock's turn to strike. There was a grim look on his face as he walked into position and poised the slender bat.

Dick promptly passed up a slow ball, at which Rand slashed.

The ball went high in the air, and Buckhart secured it when it came down.

It was the first put-out.

The cadets awoke and cheered lustily.

"Accident! accident!" yelled Knowles. "Don't mind that, boys! Just hit it on the nose, Eccles! Remember that I follow you!"

Eccles came very near not hitting it at all. After making two slashes at the sphere and failing to touch it, he let the next ball pass.

Carew dashed for second, and Brad threw to Gardner.

Now the weight of an indoor baseball, together with its size, makes throwing it entirely different from throwing an ordinary baseball. As a result, the Texan threw over Gardner's head, and Carew scooted on to third, where he arrived in safety.

Eccles hit the next ball pitched. It rolled down inside the line toward first.

Darrell secured it and touched first soon enough to put Eccles out, but in the meantime Carew scored.

"That was hard luck, Ec," said Knowles, as he danced in and caught up a bat. "Never mind; I'll keep the fun going."

He let the first ball pass and nodded knowingly as the umpire declared it a "ball."

The next one was too high, and another ball was called.

"Get 'em down! get 'em down!" cried Knowles. "I didn't bring a step-ladder with me!"

Apparently in his effort to "get 'em down" Dick lost control, for the following ball was too low.

"Three balls," called the umpire.

"Here's where I take a little walk," laughed Knowles. "That ball ought to be larger. Perhaps he could get it over the corner of the plate if it was."

"Gug-gug-gug-great smoke!" muttered Chip Jol-liby. "This is tut-tut-tut-terrible!"

Dick fancied Knowles would try for a "pass," and, therefore, he pitched two balls over the heart of the plate.

Knowles did not wiggle his bat at either of them, and both were declared strikes.

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" moaned Ted Smart. "What a mistake! That chap should be walking now!"

Knowles grabbed his bat and prepared for the next delivery. The ball started toward him as it left Dick's hand, but he saw it take a curve which must carry it over the plate, and he struck at it.

It was a liner straight from the bat into Smart's hands.

Smart sat down with a thud—but he clung to the ball.

"Out!" cried the umpire.

Fairport's first turn at the bat was over, but she had secured three runs.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE FATAL MAGNET IN THE DRESSING-ROOM.

Never in his life had Chet Arlington seemed in a better humor than when he entered the box to pitch.



He glanced around to make sure all his players were in position, called the right-fielder in a little closer, and then quickly faced about and delivered the first ball.

Smart slashed at the ball and barely touched it. It was caught by Knowles, and a strike was called on Ted.

"Oh, I can't hit it!" moaned the little chap. "I know I can't hit it!"

"You're wise in your day and generation," said Knowles. "You'll never hit it if you jab at it that way."

The next ball was wide, and Ted let it pass. Then Arlington scientifically curved one over the outside corner, the umpire declaring the second strike on Smart.

"Got him in a hole! got him in a hole!" sang Knowles.

Arlington posed for the benefit of his admirers and showed his teeth in a dazzling smile.

"Dud-dud-dud-don't let him work you, Sus-sus-Smart!" implored Jolliby. "Dud-dud-dud-don't let the good ones pup-pup-pass!"

Suddenly Arlington delivered the ball, apparently seeking to put a speedy one over. Smart struck again.

It was a slow ball, but Ted did not touch it. Knowles caught the ball and Ted was out.

"Oh, don't strike 'em all out, Arlington, old boy!" implored the Fairport catcher. "Let some of the poor fellows hit it!"

"Hi'll 'it hit! Hi'll 'it hit!" growled Bradley, as he stepped forth to the plate.

Billy did. He popped it up into the air and then scudded for first.

To the astonishment of every one, Eccles muffed the ball, and Bradley arrived at the initial sack in safety.

In a twinkling the smile vanished from Arlington's face, and he gave Eccles a look of disgust.

"Wipe the butter off your fingers!" he advised.

Brad Buckhart chuckled and gave Dick a nudge.

"Little Chetty is sore some," he observed. "Notice the lightning change. A moment ago it was all sunshine, and now there's a heap big thunder-cloud overspreading the heavens."

Jolliby rushed down to the coaching line.

"Git a sus-sus-sus-start!" he chattered. "Pup-pup-pup-play off, Billy! Sus-sus-sus-steal that sus-sus-sus-second sus-sus-sus-sack!"

"Gee whiz!" cried Knowles. "Somebody shut off that siphon!"

"Sus-sus-sus-sus-sus——" spluttered Chip.

"S-ss-ss-ss!" mocked Knowles. "Old Siphon is still sizzling."

"Sus-sus-sus-steal on the first pup-pup-pup-pitch!" urged Jolliby, paying no attention to Knowles.

"Yes, go right down!" cried the Fairport catcher. "You can do it! I can't throw to second! It's dead easy!"

Bradley did attempt to steal on the first ball pitched. He made a dash for second, fully expecting Black to give him a show. Barron had been instructed by signal to let Billy go down. Instead of doing so he saw the ball coming straight over the pan and fancied he could drive in through an opening into the outfield. His thought was that a clean, safe hit into the outfield at such a time would certainly permit Bradley to reach third, and it might bring him home.

Instead of driving the ball through the opening, Barron drove it straight into Arlington's hands.

Chet held it, turned deliberately toward first, tossed it to Stilton, and completed a double play, retiring Fardale without a run.

"It was too easy!" shouted Knowles; but his words were drowned by the yell that went up from the Fairport boys in the balcony.

Chester came in laughing, with Blacklock at his side.

"It's a cinch, Rand," he said. "I've got to skip into the dressing-room a moment. I'll be back before my turn to strike."

"What are you going to the dressing-room after?" asked Rand.

"Oh, nothing," smiled Chet, as he danced away.

In this inning, with one out and Raleigh and Werner on third and second, Arlington came to bat.

"Soak him!" again yelled the exuberant Fairport supporters in the balcony. "Lace it out, Chester!"

Chester's attempt to lace it out proved a failure, for he popped up a little fly that was captured by Merriwell, who did not leave the pitcher's box.

"Rotten! rotten! rotten!" growled Chet, as he retired and sat down.

Stilton drove a ball spinning along the floor, and Gardner booted it out into right field.

Raleigh came home and Werner attempted to follow him to the plate. With Tubbs well into the diamond Black was compelled to cover right field. He secured the ball and made a splendid throw to the plate. Werner saw he was liable to be caught, and so he slid.

Buckhart held the ball and nailed it onto the runner ere the latter's fingers could touch the plate.



Werner was declared out, and the visitors had failed to add more than one run to their credit.

"Now do something, Merriwell!" implored a Fardale boy in the balcony.

It seemed that the home team was determined to do something, for the bases were quickly filled, with only one man out, and Buckhart took his place to strike.

Brad let two benders pass and then landed on a straight one, driving it out on a line.

The base-runners all started as bat and ball met.

The ball went straight into Raleigh's hands, and he quickly snapped it to Blacklock, catching Darrell off third. This was another double play for the visitors, and again Fardale was retired without a score.

Such playing was somewhat remarkable in indoor baseball.

"Oh, I'm feeling like a lark!" chuckled Arlington, as he again walked in, with Blacklock at his elbow. "I've got to run into the dressing-room once more."

"You'll run once too many times if you keep it up," muttered Rand, as Chet hurried away.

Fairport kept up its triumphant career by adding two more runs to the scores already obtained.

Rand Blacklock watched Arlington with apprehension as Chet again entered the box.

"Never saw him like that before," thought the Fairport third-baseman. "Look at him grin and pose. He's getting positively silly. If he keeps going to the dressing-room, he'll stagger before three more innings are over."

There was a great deal of excitement when Dick faced Chet for the first time. His friends implored him to get a hit, but he missed the first ball pitched and seemed to be deceived by the second one, which he let pass, although the umpire declared it a strike.

"Why don't you learn to play this game, Merriwell?" inquired Arlington, with a silly laugh.

The next ball was high.

The next one was wide.

The next one was good.

Dick hit it.

It went skimming out of the diamond into the outfield, and by great running and a handsome slide Dick reached second.

"Accident! accident!" again shouted Knowles. "We'll anchor him right there!"

Indeed it seemed that Dick was anchored at second, for Smart struck out, and Bradley popped up a little foul to Knowles.

Chet was standing with the ball in his hands and smi-

ling with satisfaction as the plaudits of the Fairport rooters rang in his ears, when he was startled to hear several of his fellow players shrieking for him to throw to third. He turned and saw Merriwell dashing toward that sack. In his haste to catch Dick, he made a poor throw, Blacklock barely touching the ball with his outstretched right hand.

Over third went Merriwell while the baseman was chasing the ball.

Rand secured the sphere. He threw to Knowles, but Dick's hand was on the plate when he was tagged, and Fardale had secured its first run.

"Accident! accident! accident!" howled Knowles.

"Why didn't you catch that ball, Blacklock?" harshly demanded Arlington.

"Why didn't you throw it where I could reach it?" returned Rand.

"No back talk from you!" fired Chet.

"Don't worry, boys, don't worry," said Knowles. "We couldn't expect to whitewash 'em at this game."

"But I didn't want Merriwell to be the one to score," muttered Arlington.

Then he tossed a pretty one to Black, who was so anxious to hit it safe that he overreached himself and popped a fly into Carew's hands.

"If you want to win this game, you'll stop visiting the dressing-room," muttered Blacklock, as they again came in from the field.

"I don't need any advice from you!" retorted Chester, as he deliberately walked away toward the dressing-room.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE LITTLE DEMON DOES HIS WORK.

In the dressing-room there was a Little Demon in the shape of a handsome flask. This Little Demon was the brother of thousands upon thousands of other demons all over the world, whose mission it is to steal away the brains and judgment of men and make fools, degenerates, and criminals of them.

Each time Chet visited the dressing-room he patted the Little Demon affectionately on the back and kissed it on the mouth. In return, the crafty and treacherous little monster gurgled with satisfaction. Chester did not understand this gurgling language of his betrayer, which seemed to say:

"You're mine! you're mine! Oh, what a fool you are! I'll make a show of you! It's a great joke on you! You're mine! you're mine!"

The game was nearly half over before the home team



"Dern my picter!" squealed the fat boy. "I'm going to land on the pan!"

Land there he did, and Fardale had won the game.

\* \* \* \* \*

Wishing to get away from the crowd, Merriwell and Buckhart slipped out of the rink by the back way and made a cut through an alley.

Suddenly they came upon two boys who were rolling about in the snow, engaged in a fierce encounter. Even as they arrived, one of these boys pinned the other down, with a hand on his throat.

"I've kept my part of the bargain, Arlington!" panted the fellow on top. "Now I want those slips! You promised to give them to me! I'll have them, too! I'm done with you! You can't use me as a tool any more!"

"It's Ring!" muttered Dick. "We'll have to investigate this."

But before they could interfere Percy Ring leaped to his feet, Arlington's pocketbook in his hand. He saw Dick and Brad as they sprang forward.

"Keep away, you fellows!" he snarled. "Don't interfere with me! I'm not robbing him! I'm taking what belongs to me!"

"What's that?" asked Dick.

"Some I O U's of mine, which he promised to give me. They're in this pocketbook."

"Wait a minute," said Buckhart. "I'll strike a match so you can find them, Ring."

Dick seized Chester by the shoulder.

"Is this right, Arlington?" he demanded. "Did you promise to give Ring anything?"

"Oh, go ahead!" answered Chester. "Yes, let him have his I O U's! He's a fine chap to have as chairman of your old athletic committee!"

"I'll resign to-morrow!" cried Percy triumphantly, as he extracted several slips of paper from the pocketbook. "Here are the slips!"

He promptly tore them up and then flung the pocketbook into Arlington's face.

THE END.

The Next Number (516) Will Contain

## DICK MERRIWELL'S DISCERNMENT

OR,

### The Heroism of a Coward.

The Boy and the Mouse—Badgering a Coward—Straight Talk from Dick—In Dick's Room—More Friends for Mixer—Tip's Roommate—Dick Tells Fraser a Thing or Two—A Little Jiu-Jitsu—Crooked Work—Searching the Suspect—The White Lie—A New Scheme. The Madman—What Caused the Corpse to Revive. The Boy and the Maniac.

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We receive hundreds of letters every week from readers asking if we can supply the early numbers of Tip Top containing Frank's adventures. In every case we are obliged to reply that numbers 1 to 300 are entirely out of print.

We would like to call the attention of our readers to the fact that the Frank Merriwell Stories now being published in book form in the Medal Library are inclusive of these early numbers. The first book to appear was No. 150 entitled "Frank Merriwell's Schooldays."

We give herewith a complete list of all the stories that have been published in book form up to the time of writing. We will be glad to send a fine colored cover catalogue of the Medal Library which is just filled with good things for boys, upon receipt of a one-cent stamp to cover postage.

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seemed to get into it in earnest. Finally Fardale rallied and obtained four runs in a single inning. At the beginning of the sixth inning the score stood nine to five in favor of Fairport.

There was a haze before Arlington's eyes when he came to bat. He struck savagely at the ball, and each time he missed it by more than a foot. In a few moments he was declared out by the umpire.

"He's drunk!" thought Blacklock bitterly. "The chump will lose this game for us!"

Luck, however, favored Chester, for, although he used neither skill nor judgment, when he next entered the box the three batters who faced him popped up easy flies, which were caught.

"I'm just fooling with them, fellows," mumbled Arlington, as he sat down on the bench. "We've got 'em! They can't get any safe hits that will hurt us."

But now nearly all his fellow players realized his condition, and not a few of them were both angry and disgusted. It robbed them of interest and ambition. One or two proposed that Arlington should be put out of the game. This, however, could not be done, for Chester was sole captain and manager of the team. Had they tried to retire him, he would have created a scene, and this they wished to avoid.

In the seventh inning the home team took another brace and tied the score.

Fairport retaliated in the first part of the eighth by making three runs.

"Say, Arlington," urged Blacklock, "let me go in and pitch the rest of this game. You play third."

"You're nutty!" sneered Chet. "What's the matter with you? Do you think I'm a fool?"

"Pretty near it!" growled Rand. "I told you not to drink! You're loaded!"

"You're a liar!" flung back Chester. "You make me sick! I'll show you I'm all right!"

A hazy fear that he might not be all right troubled him as he reentered the box. With a last feeble effort, he sought to brace up. By a good streak of luck he struck out the first man to face him.

He turned and flung a sneering laugh at Blacklock.

The next four batters fell on Chester and hammered in two runs in short order.

The Fairport rooters in the balcony were silent and displeased, while the cadets cheered lustily.

Chet cast an eye at Blacklock and found Rand regarding him with absolute disdain.

Once more Arlington braced, and through a quick double play the home team was prevented from securing any more runs.

The ninth inning began with the score of twelve to eleven in favor of Fairport.

"Let's made four or five more scores, fellows," said Chester, in a manner and tone which plainly proclaimed his hazy state of mind. "We've got 'em, anyway, but we might as well rub it in."

Sanderson led off with a safe hit.

Werner bunted and reached first by a swift dash, while Sanderson arrived at second in safety.

"I'll bring you fellows home," announced Chester, as he walked out to the plate and stood there, swaying the least bit.

"I'll bet you a bunch of longhorns you don't get a hit!" muttered Buckhart.

"Go die!" advised Chester, as he swung at the first ball.

It was a grounder.

Merriwell blocked it and snapped it to Bradley for a force-out.

Arlington overran first, and Billy sent the ball across to Darrell. Chet returned to first in safety, then deliberately wandered off the bag and was tagged by Darrell. The umpire instantly declared him out.

"Now look at that!" growled Stilton. "What's the use to try to play ball with a man in such a condition?"

He savagely smashed at the first ball delivered by Dick, but Smart blocked the grounder and tossed it to Darrell for the third put-out.

For the last time Blacklock implored Arlington to let him go into the box.

"I'll put you out of the game if you don't shut up," growled Chet.

"You'll lose the game right here if you try to pitch it out," prophesied Rand.

He was right, for Chet had neither judgment nor ability to finish the game. He saw the players, and everything about him, through a haze. As a result, the first two batters walked.

Then a Fairport chap in the balcony rose and howled for them to take Arlington out.

While he was shouting Buckhart stepped up to the plate. Chet pitched, and Brad drove a liner to the far end of the rink.

Jolliby came home, tying the score.

Werner secured the ball and threw to Arlington.

Chester put up his hands, holding them about a foot apart, and let the ball go between them.

There was a terrific uproar as Obediah Tubbs sprinted for the plate.



# TO READERS OF TIP TOP

We earnestly recommend to all readers of *TIP TOP*, the King of the Wild West Stories in the *Rough Rider Weekly*.

These are, without doubt, second only to the Frank Merriwell Stories. Ted Strong's adventures as the young deputy sheriff of Strongburg will make you enthusiastic.

Do not fail to make his acquaintance. Get the current number from your newsdealer and after you have read it, you will thank us for calling your attention to *Rough Rider*.

**PRICE, FIVE CENTS**

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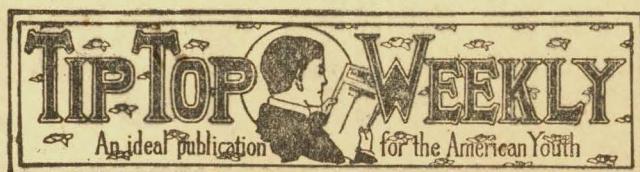
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**STREET & SMITH, Publishers, NEW YORK**





NEW YORK, February 24, 1906.

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STREET & SMITH'S TIP TOP WEEKLY,  
79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

**TIP TOP ROLL OF HONOR.**

Following the suggestion of Mr. Burt L. Standish, that appeared in his letter to Tip Top readers in No. 480, the following loyal Tip Toppers have won for themselves a place on our Honor Roll for their efforts to increase the circulation of the King of Weeklies. Get in line boys and girls and strive to have your name at the head of the list.

Thomas Schounour, Womesdorf, Pa.  
C. E. Coberly, Holden, W. Va.  
Geo. B. Welsh, 948 North Ave., Allegheny, Pa.  
C. F. S., Mexia, Texas.  
W. E. H., Worcester, Mass.  
Emile Olsen, 2419 Dodge St., Omaha, Neb.  
Alfred S. Bryan, Warrensburg, Mo.  
W. H. Alkire, 295 Lamal St., Bridgeton, N. J.  
Loyal Canadian Tip Topper, Renfrew, Ont.  
Eugene St. Laurent, Saginaw, Mich.

The names of other enthusiastic Tip Toppers will be added from time to time. Send in the result of your efforts to push the circulation of your favorite weekly and win a place on the Roll of Honor.

**APPLAUSE.**

Owing to the number of letters received, the editors of Tip Top cannot undertake to secure their publication under six weeks. Those who contribute to this department must not expect to see them before that time.

About twenty miles to the north of the Delaware, and where the lofty peaks of old Shawangunk tower above the place that will always be home, sweet home to me, I am sitting by the fire-side writing this letter to the Applause column, that I may show my appreciation of the king of weeklies, Tip Top.

Outside the raw October wind is blowing, dashing the golden leaves hither and thither, and as it whistles down the old brick chimney, it sounds the death-knell of summer. But all is bright and cozy within, and with my favorite companion, Tip Top, life to me is but a dream. "To-day, to-morrow, and forever—Tip Top." Just those four words express my sentiments, and although some day its publication will cease, the good work that it has done for the young people of America will be a living monument to its author, Burt L. Standish.

Now a word to the girls, the little sunbeams of Tip Top. I have a favor to ask of them. To begin with, I am the same age as Ann, and I am getting a collection of souvenir postals, and I have a small album that I hope to fill with postals from just

admirers of the Tip Top, especially those living outside of New York State. Now, girls, don't forget, and I am sure mother will not object if you just send a postal to one who, if you could look into his lamps, you would see was not a jollier.

I might add that I spent my vacation last summer at Asbury Park, and one of the greatest recreations I enjoyed while there was to get in my canoe and paddle to some secluded spot along the shores of Deal Lake, and there follow the adventures of the one and only Richard Merriwell.

Trusting you will pardon this long epistle, I am, very truly yours,  
T. HANS NORTHROP.

Otisville, N. Y.

The delightful days of Indian summer have not cast their magic spell over this writer, as he still feels the chill October breezes. He appears to be a lover of nature, and loves to commune with her in all her varying moods.

After reading quite a number of TIP TOP WEEKLIES, I think I have a right to send a little Applause from this place, as I have never seen any from here. I have induced a couple of friends to read Tip Top, which rightfully deserves the name, for it surely is on top. I saw in No. 497 that a Kansas Lassie would like to write to any one who would send their address through the Applause column. If she wishes to send a little perfumed message to me, I would be very much delighted. As to the characters, I like Frank and Dick first, then their chums. Who says Bradley is all right? I do. Surely he is all right. I have taken enough space, so I think I will close, hoping this will escape the waste-basket and also reach the Kansas Lassie. Respectfully,  
OSWEGO, N. Y. HARRY G. STEELE.

Perhaps a Kansas Lassie will see this and write to you.

I have been reading Tip Top for about five years, thus missing about the first two hundred numbers, but I read about Frank Merriwell in the Medal Library every month they come out, and have read them all. I think they are the same as the Tip Tops I have not read, but other boys say they are not. Please let me know which is right at the end of this letter in the Applause pages in the TIP TOP WEEKLY. The boys in this part of Baltimore who did not read Tip Top I gave several points to, and now they read as many as I do. Hoping to see this letter in the Applause page, I am, your friend,  
826 North Carey Street, Baltimore, Md. MELBOURNE HART.

Your question as to whether the Frank Merriwell stories in the Medal Library are identical with those in the Tip Top WEEKLY has come up on several occasions lately, and we take this opportunity of informing our numerous readers who have made a like inquiry that the Frank Merriwell stories in the Medal Library are a reprint of the early stories in the TIP TOP WEEKLY.

So great was the demand for the early issues of the TIP TOP WEEKLY that, it being impossible to supply back numbers of the early issues, Street & Smith decided to reissue the stories which could not be supplied in other form. Mr. Standish has arranged the stories so that each issue in the Medal Library is complete and separate, although being substantially a reprint of from two to four numbers of the TIP TOP WEEKLY. In this way it was thought that many admirers of Frank Merriwell who had become acquainted with Tip Top in later issues might be able to obtain a knowledge of their hero's school days and the days when he won fame and fortune on the stage, in the far West, in college, in the East, and in Europe.

Such a knowledge cannot but be of the greatest aid to all admirers of Frank, since the biography of his early life, his struggles, his prosperity, and "hard times," and his beginning fame will be most helpful in understanding the development of his character. To those who come to know Frank only in the last few years, the story of his early life must be, and is, of irresistible interest. To those readers, to all readers, the Frank Merriwell series of the Medal Library should be welcome. It is to be borne in mind that these stories are to be obtained in no other form, and that they are in themselves complete and fascinating novels.



I thought I would write you these few lines, to let you know what I think of your most highly appreciated TIP TOP. I think it is the great and only weekly printed, and I can hardly wait for Thursday to come so I can get it. I have been reading it since the time that Frank appeared on the platform at Fardale, and I will continue to read it as long as you print it, and I hope that will be a long time. I was glad to see Dick get back to Fardale and give Chet his bumps, and I was also glad to see him give Rob Riorden what he should have had before. I would be glad to exchange letters with any reader of TIP TOP, of either sex, in other States, and particularly with a young lady whose letter I have just read in the Applause column of No. 497, signing herself as A Kansas Lassie. Hoping to hear from her, as well as others, and with best wishes to Street & Smith, Burt L. Standish, and other TIP TOP readers, I am, as ever, a true friend of TIP TOP,

WILLIE C. DUNTON.

Hotel Pocahontas, Newport News, Va.

It may be that a "Kansas Lassie" would like to receive letters from a correspondent in the land of Pocahontas.

Permit one of your old readers a little space in your column to express my appreciation.

This is my first attempt at Applause, although I've read TIP TOP ever since its first issue; and to my thinking it possesses the same interest and fascination as ever. And why shouldn't it? Mr. Standish is an author of recognized ability.

The author is to be commended upon placing before the American youth to-day such ideals as Dick and Frank, although, like all readers of "Ye olden days," I have a preference for the stories in which the elder brother takes an active part.

Dick's accomplishments have won him many admirers among the old readers, and have demonstrated time and time again that he is capable of filling Frank's place.

Some readers are under the impression that Dick will surpass Frank's achievements on the gridiron, diamond, track, etc. Probably he will, as old records are being washed off the slate continually by youngsters. Let us hope so, anyway; but there will be no denying the fact that Frank taught him. Should he obtain higher honors, no one would be more willing than the writer to cheer and encourage him to redoubled efforts; but he will never be able to forget the impression made by Frank on his enthusiasts, as that is eradicable.

I can joyously recall the day I read my first TIP TOP. It was in the school-room, and I was guilty of not paying much attention to my studies. How I enjoyed them when a little lad in knickerbockers! I still enjoy it now. Times are changed, however, since those memorable days when well-directed peas from shooters played havoc with the old master's polished dome.

Would like to say that I solicit correspondence, and will promptly reply to all letters received.

Get your pins in motion, all you readers of the fair and sterner sex.

Trusting that you will give this recognition, I am,

3019 Lawrence Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

FRED CLARK.

None of us ever outgrow TIP TOP. Here is our friend from Philadelphia, who began reading about Frank years ago when they both were at school. He takes as much interest in the doings of Dick as he did in the exploits of Frank. Fred Clark is several years older than when he first read TIP TOP, but his heart is as young as ever, and TIP TOP remains a perennial source of present enjoyment and fond remembrance.

I have been a constant reader of your king of weeklies for the past five years. I agree with "Young Canada" by expressing his opinion of it by saying "it is a bird." The readers of TIP TOP would appreciate seeing a picture of Burt L. Standish, as Aubrey Egerton suggests in No. 498.

About six months ago I got up a reading club, which I named the TIP TOP Reading Club. At first there were only four boys besides myself who belonged to it. One day I decided to go out and try to get more members. I succeeded in getting a few more that day, but was not yet satisfied; and in about a week I had twenty-one members altogether. I called a meeting the next week, and all the new members were present. They saw several copies of TIP TOP on the table, and right away most of them declined to stay in the club. They said their folks would not allow them to read such trash. I begged of them to read the books before they said any more. When they had finished

reading there was not one in the lot but what changed his mind about staying. Since then I have been trying to get more boys to begin reading the TIP TOP, and I do not think that there are many of my friends who do not read it. I would be obliged if this escapes the waste-basket. I remain,

Medina, N. Y.

RAYMOND ORIN.

You are a very persevering young man. Your successful effort to enlarge the membership of your club has interested us very much. If you show the same determined spirit in everything else you undertake, we know you will always succeed, and expect to hear great things from you when you become a man. We take pleasure in placing your name on the Honor Roll.

Being an old TIP Topper, would like to say it is the king of the weeklies. I am after the TIP TOP as bad as I am after my meals. I think Dick and Brad are fine, and also Dick's friends; that includes the girls. I think that Bob Riorden ought to be kicked out of Fardale; am glad Dick fixed his face for him. Just let Mr. Bob or Chester Arlington enter a Texas school and start some of their tricks. He'll get his. Ask Brad Buckhart; he'll tell you all about it. I've had several boys say to me, Why are you reading such truck? I told them a few things about TIP TOP and let them read some of the back numbers. Now they are after it as bad as I am. I suppose the Kansas Lassie, of Wellington, Kan., has heard from Jack D. She can write to me if she wants to. Well, hoping this will miss the waste-basket, my best wishes to Mr. Standish and Street & Smith, yours for

TIP TOP,  
Marlin, Tex.

MAX E. ARONSON.

So you are after TIP TOP as bad as your meals? Really, now, don't you think that TIP TOP is a meal in itself?

Will you kindly insert the following "cracked" verses in the Applause column of TIP TOP, if its commendations are worthy of Applause:

#### THE WORKER'S THOUGHTS.

When the sun has gone to rest,  
And the day has stood the test;  
When silvery beams of the moon  
Come stealing thro' the gloom;  
When tired and thoroughly bored  
Of machines that have crashed and roared,  
And the grime, dirt, and spoils  
Have settled down in piles—  
Going home with his dinner-pail  
The reader thinks of fair Fardale.  
To you, TIP TOP, he'll give his yell;  
Another to Dick Merriwell;  
To my favorite, dear old Brad,  
The loudest "tiger" he ever had.  
A double one to Frank Merriwell;  
A still greater one to old Burt L.,  
And one to obliging Street & Smith,  
"The old Reli," I close this with.

My first attempt to write poetic Applause to TIP TOP,  
New York, N. Y.

MICHAEL BECK.

New York does not intend to let other parts of the country carry off all the laurel for verse-tributes to TIP TOP and its famous characters.

I have only read your celebrated weekly six months, but feel that I am entitled to a small space in the Applause column. I have read more about Dick than Frank, and like him better, but I take a strong interest in Frank and his chums, especially Jim Stretcher.

But in Dick's crowd, I "tink dat dat Riorden is about der limit. I tink he would do better wit' his head knocked off. See?" I think that June is the best character in the stories, only she does too much for her ungrateful brother. Very truly yours,

New Harmony, Ind.

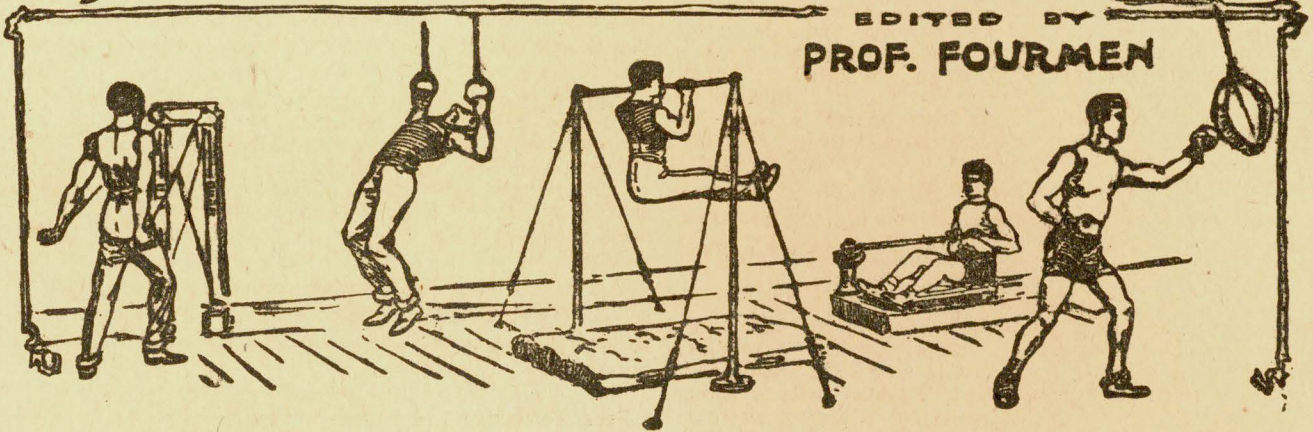
HARVEY R. WILLMANN.

So you like Dick better than Frank? We fear that the majority of our readers do not agree with you. Both brothers have their admirers, but when a person likes one he cannot help liking the other.



# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

EDITED BY  
PROF. FOURMEN



PROF. FOURMEN: I have read a great many of your famous TIP TOPS, and am taking the liberty of asking you a few questions. I am 11 years old; 4 feet 10 inches tall; chest, normal, 27 inches; expanded, 30 inches; right bicep, 8 inches; left, 8½ inches; thigh, 27½ inches; calves, 12 inches; forearm, 15 inches; neck, 12 inches; weight, 78 pounds; ankle, 9 inches; waist, 26 inches; around shoulders, 28 inches. How are my measurements, and where are my weak points? Yours truly,  
Beardstown, Ill.

HAROLD SEEGER.

You have a good chest measurement, but you might exercise with dumb-bells to enlarge your biceps.

PROF. FOURMEN: I am a constant reader of the TIP TOP WEEKLY. I wish to become an athlete. My measurements are as follows. Will you kindly tell me what you think of them, and what is best to develop myself? Age, 10 years 11 months; height, 4 feet 5 inches; weight, 70½ pounds without coat and hat; chest, normal, 24 inches; expanded, 26 inches; waist, 23 inches; neck, 11 inches; right biceps, 8 inches; left, 7¾ inches; right forearm, 7¾ inches; left, 7 inches; right thigh, 16½ inches; left, 16¼ inches; right and left calf, 10¾ inches. Anxiously awaiting your answer, I remain, yours very truly,  
108 Tichenor Street, Newark, N. J.

FRANK MCGEE.

You are fairly well built for a boy of your age, but, of course, you will get somewhat larger later on.

PROF. FOURMEN: Having read TIP TOP from No. 118 to date, I hereby take the liberty of submitting a few measurements. Age, 15½ years; height, 5 feet 9½ inches; weight, 126 pounds; chest, normal, 33 inches; expanded, 35 inches; biceps, 10½ inches; flexed, 12 inches; around shoulders, 40 inches; neck, 14 inches; calves, 13 inches. 1. How are these measurements? 2. What are my weak points? My strong ones? Hoping to see this in print soon, and thanking you in advance, I remain,  
Williamsport, Pa.

"X. Y. Z."

You need general training in a good gymnasium where you can take exercise for the various muscles of your body. What you should have is all-around development. You lack several pounds in weight, and should try to take on as much flesh as possible.

PROF. FOURMEN: I am a reader of the TIP TOP, and so will take the liberty of asking you a few questions. How are my measurements? My age is 15 years 8 months; height, 5 feet 1½ inches; weight, 112 pounds; neck, 13½ inches; chest, contracted, 32 inches; expanded, 34 inches; right forearm, 9¼ inches; left, 9 inches; calves, 12½ inches; shoulders, 17 inches; around shoulders, 40 inches. What are my weak points? How can I strengthen them? I play right half-back on our football team, and I am able to kick a drop about forty yards. I would like to become a good punter, and what way would you advise me to learn? I remain,  
Chardon, Ohio.

THOS. L. FLETCHER.

For a light team you are in good condition. But to play in large teams you would have to increase both size and weight. I cannot detect any weak points. On the other hand, you are

almost perfectly proportioned. There are two kinds of punts, the spiral and the end-over-end kick. The spiral is the one for you to practise at first. Hold the ball a little above the waist-line. Advance with the right foot about two feet and follow it with the left, which you should carry about a yard and slightly to the right at the same time. As the right foot is swung forward, drop the ball so that it strikes about midway between the base of the instep and the toe. Hold the leg rigid as the ball hits the foot. Be careful to drop the ball on the foot—do not throw it. Keep your eye on the point where you intend to send the ball in making the kick.

PROF. FOURMEN: Having been a constant reader of the TIP TOP WEEKLY for a long time, getting it at our local news-dealer's, I would like to ask you a few questions. 1. Am 18 years of age, weigh 135 pounds, but am only 5 feet 2 inches in height. Can a boy grow after reaching my age? 2. Can a "stretching machine" increase one's height? Do you think I ought to use one, or rather wait a year or so until I am sure that I cannot grow by nature? 3. Supposing my growth to have been stunted by some cause, and that cause is now removed, do you think I can hope to gain a little that I lost? Thanking you in advance, and hoping to see this in print, I remain,  
South Dakota.

A CONSTANT READER.

1. No one can safely say that he will stop growing before he reaches the age of twenty-one.

2. There is no way of increasing one's height. Nature can be forced in other things, but she decidedly objects to having a person's height increased by any method but her own. What that method is no one knows. It is a secret that she closely guards. You might grow an inch or two in as many years, but it would occur in accordance with certain natural laws of physiology with which no physical culturist can claim acquaintance, no matter how extensive his knowledge of health matters.

PROF. FOURMEN: I take the trouble to ask you a few questions. Will you tell me the full address of Spalding Bros.? I want to get a book from them about pitching. When I try running I get all out of breath. What is good for it? Hoping this escapes the waste-basket and that you will excuse my poor writing, for I have had only two years of schooling, I remain,  
Detroit, Mich.

A POOR WELL-WISHER.

Write to A. G. Spalding & Co., New York. The handbook on pitching issued by this firm will cost only ten cents. You will find all the essentials for becoming a good pitcher in that pamphlet. You probably have not been running regularly from day to day to cause you shortness of breath. Begin with short distances and gradually increase them. You will find that, after a few weeks of steady training, it will not trouble you as much as it does now.

PROF. FOURMEN: Having read a number of TIP TOP WEEKLIES, and as I am interested in athletics and belong to the Central Y.



M. C. A. at Albany, I take the liberty to give you my measurements. Here they are: Biceps, relaxed,  $9\frac{3}{4}$  inches; contracted, 12 inches; forearm, 11 inches; calves, 13 inches; thighs, 21 inches; waist, 33 inches; chest, normal, 31 inches; expanded,  $33\frac{1}{2}$  inches; hip, 38 inches; neck,  $13\frac{1}{2}$  inches; wrist,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches; weight, 128 pounds; age,  $15\frac{1}{2}$  years; height,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches. 1. What are my weak points and strong points? 2. I am a great lover of running. Am I too heavily built for running? 3. How are my measurements? Thanking you in advance, I wish the weekly all the success it deserves. I close,  
J. R. MIDFORD.  
Albany, N. Y.

You are very solidly built. Hammer-throwing and exercises of that sort are better for you to cultivate than running, except, of course, as you wish to reduce weight.

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a steady reader of the TIP TOP WEEKLY, I would like to ask you a few questions about size, measurements, etc. I am 17 years of age, weigh 132 pounds, and am 5 feet 4 inches tall. I go to a gymnasium twice a week, each time for two hours, which consists of the general exercise and basket-ball. I go to work every morning at 8:30 A. M. and stop at 5:30 P. M. I sit most of the time. Will you please tell what you think my measurements ought to be? Also, please tell me how I can obtain your article on "Training Table for Young Men"? Hoping to see this in the TIP TOP, I close, with three cheers for Professor Fourmen, HERMAN L. GOLDMAN.  
Boston, Mass.

The measurements for one of your height and age are the following: Weight, 121 pounds; neck, 13 inches; waist, 31 inches; chest, 35 inches; biceps, 13 inches; forearm,  $10\frac{3}{4}$  inches; thighs, 19 inches; calves, 13 inches. You see from this table that you are somewhat overweight. Continue your gymnasium work and try to reduce flesh. I have no volume with the title you speak of. Perhaps you mean the "Frank Merriwell Book of Athletic Development," issued by Street & Smith. It will be sent to you post-paid for fourteen cents.

PROF. FOURMEN: As I am desirous of having your opinion of my measurements, I send them herewith. Age, 17 years 2 months; height, 6 feet 1 inch; weight, 140 pounds; chest, normal, 33 inches; expanded,  $35\frac{1}{2}$  inches; waist, 36 inches; thigh, 21 inches; calf,  $14\frac{1}{2}$  inches; ankle, 12 inches; wrist, 6 inches; forearm,  $9\frac{1}{2}$  inches; elbow, 10 inches; across shoulders, 18 inches; reach,  $32\frac{1}{2}$  inches. As you can see by my measurements, I am tall and thin—the fellows call me "lanky." I neither smoke nor chew, and am desirous of becoming an athlete. Do you think such a thing is possible in my case? Please point out my weak spots. I suppose they are all weak, in comparison with other boys of my age. What is a cure for pimples? Thanking you in advance for any advice you may give me, and begging pardon for taking up so much space in your valuable paper, I am, gratefully and respectfully yours,  
"EPHRAIM GALLUP."  
St. Paul, Minn.

You are very much under weight; consequently, your measurements do not approach the standard. But proper training will help you. As you are in a large city, where it is possible to join a well-equipped Y. M. C. A. gymnasium at small cost, take out a membership at your earliest convenience, and put yourself under the instruction of the physical director in charge. He will give you a thorough examination, lay out a course of exercise, and watch your progress from day to day. You need to exercise with regard to a gradual and proportionate development of all parts of your body, and it is better to have at your command a variety of apparatus such as can be found only in a gymnasium of complete appointments. Eat to grow fat. Beef, ham, mutton, lamb, and chicken should be on your bill of fare. If your digestion is good, eat pork. By way of variety, add veal, turkey, and duck. Beans, peas, potatoes have qualities suitable for your purpose. Eggs, milk, and buttermilk are good. Avoid tea, coffee, and sour things, like pickles. It is needless to say do not smoke or chew. Nobody ever got fat on a "diet" of tobacco. Drink plenty of water, but only between meals. Get out in the air as much as possible. Sleep eight or nine hours, and go to bed

as much before midnight as you can. Follow my instructions carefully. I expect to hear in a year's time that you have gained weight and made a new person of yourself. You will also find that the pimples you complain of will have disappeared.

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a constant reader of TIP TOP, I take the liberty of sending in my measurements for your opinion of my weak and strong points. Age, 18 years 6 months; height, 5 feet  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches; right biceps,  $11\frac{1}{2}$  inches; left, 11 inches; weight, stripped, 131 pounds; chest, normal, 34 inches; expanded, 37 inches. Hoping to see this soon in TIP TOP, I remain, yours gratefully,  
P. A. K.  
New York City.

You have a very large chest expansion for a person of your height. You weigh several pounds more than is necessary. But it is not enough to be an incumbrance, and should not cause any uneasiness.

PROF. FOURMEN: I have been reading your weekly for a number of years, and think it is just fine. I want to ask you if I am all right in my measurements. I am 17 years old, 5 feet 8 inches in stockings, and weigh 138 pounds. Neck,  $14\frac{1}{2}$  inches; shoulders, 40 inches; chest, 39 inches; biceps, 12 inches; forearm, 11 inches; waist, 29 inches; thigh, 21 inches; calf, 13 inches. 1. Do I weigh enough? 2. What are my weak points?  
Ashland, Wis. RED TOP NO. A 1.

Exercise to take on ten pounds more weight. You need a general gymnastic training to give you a well-rounded physique.

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a reader of TIP TOP for the last four years, I take the liberty to ask a few questions regarding my measurements, which are as follows: Age, 18 years 6 months; height, 5 feet 5 inches; weight, 150 pounds; chest, normal, 35 inches; expanded, 38 inches; neck,  $15\frac{1}{4}$  inches; biceps,  $12\frac{1}{2}$  inches; waist,  $30\frac{1}{2}$  inches; thigh,  $22\frac{1}{2}$  inches; calf,  $14\frac{1}{2}$  inches. 1. How are my measurements? 2. Do you think I will grow taller? 3. If I do not exercise on Sundays, will I lose anything? Thanking you in advance for your answers, I remain,  
Very sincerely,  
RICHARD DEUTSCH.

Although your weight is way above normal, your chest measurement is just right. Your waist should be two inches larger. Reduce your thighs two and one-half inches, and they will have the right proportion. The size of your calves should be one and one-half inches less than they are. Keep up the course of training you have been following since I passed upon your measurements two years ago. Though there are these few discrepancies I have mentioned, you are, on the whole, very well developed. Daily exercise will keep you in the pink of condition, making your health and strength a continual source of satisfaction. Your neck should measure two inches less, while the biceps lack an inch. But proper exercise will develop the one and reduce the other. As you are only eighteen, there is a possibility of your growing taller in the next two or three years.

While I look upon Sunday as a day of rest, the one day of the week when a person should relax from his labors and pleasures, and spend his time in a quiet observance of those things that are designed to remind him of the day's significance, I think that one who is exercising regularly during the rest of the week should not neglect to care for his body on Sunday as well as any other day. Limit it, however, to the fifteen-minute "setting-up" exercises, without apparatus, in the morning before breakfast, and the same upon retiring at night.

## "GOLDEN HOURS."

Boys, have you any old numbers of Golden Hours? If so, see what numbers are among them and write me, stating price. I will pay liberally to complete my files. Address WILLIAMS, Station "O," Box 24, New York City.



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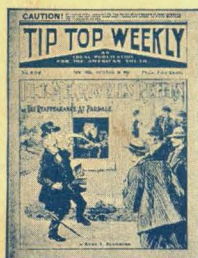
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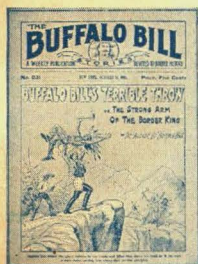
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## TIP TOP WEEKLY

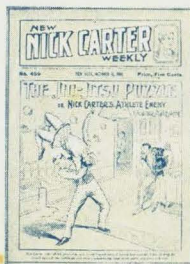
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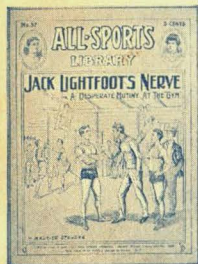
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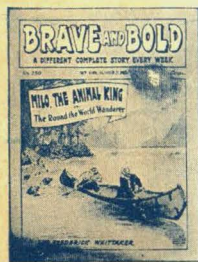
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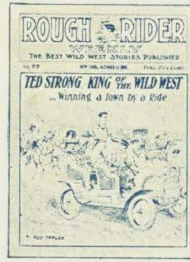
Do not think for a second, boys, that these stories are a lot of musty history, just sugar-coated. They are all new tales of exciting adventure on land and sea, in all of which boys of your own age took part.

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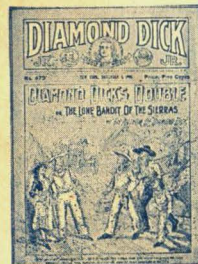
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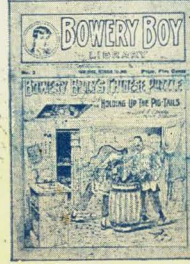
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